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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-067

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Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 29 Mar

NC0304125996

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 29 March edition of the Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Criticism of Privatization Program Continues
2. Israeli-U.S. Alliance Against Muslims Said Weakening
3. U.S. Gives Israel Green Light To Eliminate Islamists
4. Worldwide Islamic Movement Rejects Sharm al-Shaykh Summit
5. New Islamic Party in Gaza Viewed
6. Arab Leaders' Position on Jerusalem Criticized
7. Experts Cited on Reported Israeli Nuclear Leak
8. Arabs Urged To Call For World Summit on U.S. Terrorism
9. Government Urged To Solve Problem of Sectarian Sedition

CRITICISM OF PRIVATIZATION PROGRAM CONTINUES

In a 2,000-word report on page 2, Ahmad 'Abd-al-Mun'im cites speeches and proceedings at the General Assembly of Textile Workers. He says representatives of the 600,000 workers in this industry called on the government not to rush ahead with the sale of the public sector and to give successful leaders a chance to manage faltering public enterprises. He says representatives of the workers "rejected the measures taken by the government to open the door to Zionist investors." The reporter cites workers complaining that the sale of companies will harm their future. They called on the government to pass the necessary legislation to protect their rights and not to feel content with only verbal promises. The General Assembly of Textile Workers is also cited rejecting the agricultural policies of Agriculture Minister Yusuf Wali, which "destroyed the cotton harvest and resulted in losses for the public companies." The reporter also cites the workers fully rejecting Israel's practices in the occupied Arab territories and denouncing the continuing blockade against Iraq and Libya.

—In another 1,500-word report on page 4, 'Ala' al-Bahhar and Subhi Buhayri cite experts warning against the sale of public banks. Such a sale is seen as a threat to national security; it will subject the economy to speculation and open the door to money laundering by the public sector.

—In a 600-word article on page 4, Tal'at Musallam argues that the sale of the public sector is not simply an economic issue. He says the public sector played the primary role in Egypt's steadfastness and survival over the years and blames the faltering of public companies on bad political and economic management. He says the public sector is being sold off cheap, which means that Egypt's resources are being looted. He adds: The sale suggests Egypt has gone bankrupt, but it is the political administration that has gone bankrupt. Musallam concludes: "This issue concerns national security and the future of a people, a nation, and generations; it is not one of selling companies. This must be clear to everybody. While addressing this issue we must think of the future of our children, who are threatened with hunger, backwardness, and indeed destruction."

—In a 1,500-word article on the same page, Jamal al-Banna warns of the negative impact of the privatization program on public sector workers. He says government promises that these workers will not be harmed are worthless because ultimately the government cannot prevent buyers from firing workers. He says freedom to "hire and fire" is a basic management right and a capitalist mechanism. He says sweeping technological progress is another threat to workers; it will certainly mean further loss of jobs. The writer urges the workers to establish a strong trade union movement to defend their rights. He notes that the existing movement, controlled as it is by members of the ruling party, is "not free" and is "undemocratic."

—In a 2,000-word article on page 2, Labor Party Secretary General 'Adil Husayn terms the sale of the public sector as a "crime" and urges it to be stopped immediately. "We are in front of a major looting and fraud operation, not only on behalf of Egyptian thieves, but also on behalf of foreign and Zionist thieves," he writes. Noting that the sale of the public sector is a prescription offered by the IMF and the World Bank, "which are directly supported by the American-Israeli alliance," Husayn maintains that similar sales proved to be an "economic disaster" in other places, such as Latin America and Eastern Europe. He questions the prime minister's assertion that the sale will not result in further unemployment and says the two necessary controls for privatization — safeguarding economic independence and selling companies at their real price — are lacking. Husayn urges the establishment of a national committee to discuss the whole issue and a general referendum on the committee's recommendations, "as long as there is no forgery."

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ISRAELI-U.S. ALLIANCE AGAINST MUSLIMS SAID WEAKENING

In another 5,000-word article on page 5, Labor Party Secretary General 'Adil Husayn says that international situations and relations are being reshaped in a way that serves "Islamic renaissance" and weakens the "American-Israeli alliance against Muslims." Husayn first suggests that after the Sharm al-Shaykh summit and the security agreements between Israel and the United States, "the war against Islamic awakening" will enter a new stage under the name of combating terrorism. He says Arab security services and "enemy" security agencies will cooperate to implement "this dirty task." He says the blockade against Arabs and Muslims in Palestine, Iraq, Libya, Iran, and Sudan will intensify. But all this, Husayn maintains, "will not frighten our nation, and will not stop the convoys of martyrdom-seekers, God willing."

Husayn then discusses factors which he believes "strengthen our front and weaken the opposite alliance." He mentions Europe's displeasure with the Israeli-U.S "monopoly" on the Arab region and U.S. domination of the oil-rich Gulf region. He says Europe has a firm interest in stabilizing the current situations in Iran, Iraq, and Libya so that the oil of these countries can stay away from the American grip. He says Europe is also annoyed with Israel's possession of a nuclear arsenal, as this threatens Europe itself. He urges the Arabs to make intensive efforts to improve ties with Europe and "remove the historical hostility (which is fed by the Zionists) between Europe and Islam."

Husayn also refers to the economic and military power of China and its recent rejection of U.S. threats over Taiwan. By carrying out war games near the Taiwanese coast, the writer says, China was telling the United States that Asia is for Asians, and that the presence of U.S. fleets in any part of Asia does not change anything. The third factor that weakens the American-Israeli alliance, Husayn says, is the domestic situation in the United States itself. He says the U.S. economy is suffering deep structural problems, and he notes "social grievances" like increasing unemployment, poverty, violence, drugs, and struggle among the various ethnic groups within American society. Here, the writer notes the "blessed religious march" by a million blacks under Louis Farrakhan, and contacts between blacks and other groups to form a powerful political bloc in the United States. Husayn concludes: "Our jihad and firm adherence to our rights will end the arrogance of our enemies and the designs of humiliation. Everything that is taking place in the world around us will help us score victory soon."

U.S. GIVES ISRAEL GREEN LIGHT TO ELIMINATE ISLAMISTS

An unattributed 500-word report on page 8 cites "important reports" as saying "the U.S.Administration gave the government of terrorist Shim'on Peres a green light to eliminate the Islamic movements that oppose the current peace process." The reports say that President Clinton has promised all kind of support to Israel to implement these plans. The reports say the United States pledged to protect Israel's security and that the United States and Israel will strengthen cooperation between the Mosad and the CIA to monitor and eliminate Islamist leaders, and will work to besiege regional countries accused of supporting Islamic movements.

WORLDWIDE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT REJECTS SHARM AL-SHAYKH SUMMIT

An unattributed 300-word report on pages 1 and 8 cites Labor Party Leader Ibrahim Shukri as saying, upon his return from the meetings of the General Secretariat of the Popular Islamic Command [PIC] in Azerbaijan, that the PIC "stressed total rejection of plans to impose sanctions against Sudan." It also rejected the embargo against Libya and Iraq. Shukri says the PIC saluted the struggle of the Palestinian people to regain their land and rejected the results of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit as service to Israel. The PIC also rejected Eritrea's occupation of al-Hanish island and stressed support for the Azerbaijani people in their efforts to regain their lands occupied by Armenia. The report says Louis Farrakhan was elected an assistant secretary general of the PIC, and the PIC Executive Bureau was formed from Necmettin Erbakan, Shaykh Ibrahim Salih, Dr. Ahmad Shawqi al-Hafni, and Ibrahim al-Ghuwayl.

NEW ISLAMIC PARTY IN GAZA VIEWED

In a 600-word article on page 7, columnist Muhammad Jamal 'Arafah discusses the establishment in Gaza of the Islamic Salvation Party. He says the party is not likely to work freely because it fully rejects all the agreements the Palestinian Authority [PA] signed with Israel. He notes that the party is not an alternative to the Islamic Resistance Movement-Hamas, but says the party seems to be the last attempt to save the infrastructure of Hamas, which both the PA and Israel are out to destroy.

ARAB LEADERS' POSITION ON JERUSALEM CRITICIZED

In a 500-word article on page 8, Abu-al-'Ula Madi, representative of al-Wasat Party, which is now applying for a license, discusses Jerusalem against the backdrop of a statement distributed by the Israeli pavilion in Cairo Industrial Fair under the headline "Jerusalem Is

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the Capital of Israel." The Egyptian Foreign Ministry reportedly protested, saying this was a political activity out of harmony with the fair's economic purposes. The writer says he was shocked and pained by this "polite" Egyptian reaction. He says the Foreign Ministry should have ordered closure of the Israeli pavilion and issued a statement stressing that Jerusalem is an Arab and Islamic capital. The writer laments the fact that no Arab ruler is confronting Israel's claims in Jerusalem and defending the holy city as an Arab and Islamic capital.

EXPERTS CITED ON REPORTED ISRAELI NUCLEAR LEAK

In a 2,000-word report on page 3, 'Adil al-Bahnasawi cites some experts on the reported leakage of nuclear radiation from the Israeli nuclear reactor in Dimona. The experts warn of the results of such a leak. They note that Israel increased the reactor's power from 26 megawatts in the 60's to 150 megawatts in the past two years. The experts say the leak may have come from concrete masses built under the Gulf of Aqaba to dump nuclear waste. They say the reactor works around the clock, producing large amounts of radioactive waste. The writer says Israel will build another nuclear reactor only 25 kilometers from the Egyptian border, which he says is a violation of international law. He urges the Egyptian government to make more intensive moves against Israel's nuclear activity. The solution, he says, lies in reviving Egypt's nuclear program, as this will create strategic balance with Israel.

ARABS URGED TO CALL FOR WORLD SUMMIT ON U.S. TERRORISM

In a 1,000-word article on page 3, Mahfuz 'Azzam discusses confessions by an Iraqi opposition figure in which he said that he carried out bombings and terrorist operations in Iraq at the request of the CIA. He concludes that the United States supports terrorism and practices a double standard: accepting Israeli terrorism and rejecting legitimate "resistance" against occupation . He says the revelation by the Iraqi opposition embarrassed Egypt and the Arab governments. They should hasten to hold a summit to discuss U.S. terrorism, which is directed against Arabs and Muslims, or they should raise the issue before the UN Security Council. The writer says the Egyptian government must not remain silent on U.S. "crimes."

GOVERNMENT URGED TO SOLVE PROBLEM OF SECTARIAN SEDITION

In a 1,500-word article on page 9, Dr. Ahmad 'Abd-al-Rahman discusses recent violence against Copts in some parts of Egypt, urging "scientific" confrontation of the problem and an objective study of Islamic-Christian relations in Egypt to bolster national unity and spare the country a sectarian sedition. He says "secularist" writers will undoubtedly use the recent incidents to incite Copts against Muslims and instigate the state against Islamists. He says all sides must forget their political and ideological differences and party affiliations and place the country's higher interests above anything else. "Further indiscriminate arrests," he says, "will only create further tension." It is the responsibility of the ruling regime to find the solution this major issue, he states.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Arrives in Nabulus

JN0404135696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1300 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat arrived a short while ago in Nabulus from Ramallah and al-Birah Governorate.

President 'Arafat today made a tour in Ramallah City. He visited the Palestinian Statistics Center and Abu-Rayyah Rehabilitation Center for the Handicapped.

'Arafat also visited the family of martyr [Taysir] al-Lawzi who died in a regrettable incident last Sunday [31 March]. The president promised the martyr's family to set up an inquiry into the incident.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Urayqat on Israeli Blockade, Washington Talks

NC0504103396 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 5 Apr 96

[Telephone interview with Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, PLC member, in Jericho, by Fayiz al-Miliji, in Cairo; date not given; from the "Dialogue From Afar" feature—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Miliji] Dr. Sa'ib, the Palestinian issue is passing through a very serious period these days as a result of the Israeli siege. We have heard that these measures have been eased somewhat. We would like you to explain to us the current situation in the Palestinian territory.

['Urayqat] I believe that the situation has not changed. During the meeting of the Palestinian Legislative Council [PLC], which was attended by President Brother Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat], the current security, political, and economic issues were discussed in light of the war being waged against us by the Israeli Government. As we have often said, Shim'on Peres has declared war on violence and terrorism while in fact waging just such a war on Yasir 'Arafat, the Palestinian Authority [PA],

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and the Palestinian people. The situation here is now known to everyone. The danger is that the world is dealing with the effects of the closure and with reports of its easing without considering the fact that the closure not only violates and contravenes the Palestinian-Israeli agreement but also international law and norms. This is a very important issue. Is it right to use the upcoming Israeli elections or political considerations in Washington as an excuse to let Israel behave like it is above the law? Israel is not only repudiating the peace process and the agreements signed with it, it is using collective sanctions, which are internationally banned.

[Al-Miliji] Is the security cordon still in effect around the West Bank and Gaza Strip?

['Urayqat] Yes. There are 50,000 workers who have lost their jobs for more than 35 or 40 days. This means a monthly loss of $42 million for the PA's budget. Exports of approximately 1,000 tonnes of vegetables and 750 tonnes of citrus fruits that must be shipped daily from the Gaza strip—we are only talking of Gaza—have been suspended. In addition, 1 million flowers cannot be exported from the Gaza Strip in view of the Israeli measures. Peres says security matters prevent shipping goods to Israel. But what are his security fears that prevent shipment of these goods via the Rafah crossing point into Egypt, or via the al-Karamah Bridge to Jordan? The issue has nothing to do with security, but rather with collective punishment against the entire Palestinian people.

In view of the elections 57 days from now, it looks as if the Israeli party that the voters think is capable of inflicting the most harm on the Palestinian people will win. This is extremely regrettable and shameful, particularly as we are talking of a peace process.

[Al-Miliji] We would like you to explain to us the situation at the crossing points between the West Bank and Jordan and between Gaza and Egypt.

['Urayqat] As you know, the agreement signed with the Israelis—by the way, the agreement is not a peace treaty or peace agreement but a transitional one—stipulates that the international crossing points, Jerusalem, the settlements, and the borders will be discussed in the final negotiations scheduled to begin on 4 May, 1996. Economic arrangements were made to allow free passage of goods from and to the PA areas via the international crossing points with Egypt and Jordan and from and to Israel. What has happened is that Israel has closed these crossing points. The Israelis claim that they have eased these measures. However, the Gaza Strip needs 240 tonnes of wheat daily. The question is not one of a security but of political decisions aimed at punishing the Palestinian people and showing the Israeli voters that they are deliberately inflicting suffering and harm on the Palestinian people.

[Al-Miliji] You attended the Washington expert-level meetings as a representative of the Palestinian side. A U.S. plan was announced at these meetings to ease the suffering of the Palestinian people. What is the truth of the matter?

['Urayqat] In fact, this is what we tried to (?confront) in Washington when U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher proposed his plan. He said, verbatim: "There is a plan being developed." He did not say that there was any plan to implement. It seems that he made his proposal at the outset of the meeting in order to defuse the anger or to divert attention from the real issue and focus attention on terrorism.

When they attended the Sharm al-Shaykh summit and signed the Sharm al-Shaykh summit statement, they pledged to hold another meeting in Washington to discuss the recommendations of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit. When I went to Washington, I found out that the U.S. Administration had put only one point on the agenda and repudiated most of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit resolutions relating to supporting the peace process on the Palestinian-Israeli track, implementing the signed agreements, backing the Syrian and Lebanese peace tracks, and considering the urgent needs of the Palestinian people. They only focused only on one point.

As you know, before the meetings began, the Egyptian delegation said that the agenda must be endorsed in accordance with the Sharm al-Shaykh summit resolutions to honor what our leaders agreed upon. Indeed, thanks to Egyptian, Saudi, Arab, Palestinian, and European efforts, we succeeded in altering the agenda. When Christopher proposed his six points, we stated that we had heard these points a month ago. It seems that the goal was to assuage the anger.

We want international supervision of the crossing points. We want UN, U.S, and world delegates to come to the crossing points to see for themselves what is happening. There is a big difference between what should be and what is actually happening. The world believes that these measures have been eased. The question is not easing but lifting these collective sanctions that have plunged the peace process to an abyss. Also, when the Washington meetings opened on 28 March, Israeli withdrawal from Hebron was scheduled to have already taken place, according to the agreement. However, Israel has not withdrawn from that city. The question now is: Is there any agreement? Is there a peace process? This is what we asked at Washington meeting, but regrettably received no answer.

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[Al-Miliji] Then what did you come up with from the Washington meetings?

['Urayqat] We succeeded in stopping the attempts to divert the Sharm al-Shaykh resolution from the basic issue—all tracks of the peace process—to combating terrorism. We also succeeded in inserting this in the recommendations to the ministerial meeting scheduled for 23 April. In fact, this is the goal of the Washington meetings—to make recommendations for the ministerial conference. We also agreed to hold a meeting in Brussels on 12 April to discuss the urgent economic needs of the Palestinian people.

[Al-Miliji] As the final stage negotiations draw near, and in light of the PLC meeting yesterday, what are the most important issues you discussed?

['Urayqat] The PLC has examined the economic, political, and security situation. It underlined the serious nature of this stage. It stressed the need to implement the agreements and to begin the final stage negotiations on time on 4 May. The PLC appealed to the world for intercession to prevent the deterioration of the peace process. It also called for realizing the Palestinian people's potential and urged Palestinian businessmen inside and outside Palestinian territory to provide jobs to Palestinians. It called on the Arab countries to open their markets to Palestinian products. We hope that there will be positive response to the Palestinian people's urgent needs.

When we say that the final stage negotiations must start on time, we must also say that our goal is to effect a real separation between the two peoples based on their being two states. We want this separation because there is no longer any other possibility if we want the peace process to succeed. What we fear, as the PLC has stated, is that the Israeli Government might use the suicide operations and the current election campaign in Israel as a pretext not to honor the date of the final stage negotiations. I believe that this would be a disaster. The Israelis reneged on withdrawal from Hebron, [words indistinct], on safe crossing-points, on arrangements on the international crossing points, and on public order, which is a Palestinian responsibility according to the agreement on the Palestinian rural areas.

In view of all these issues, in my view there is no longer any peace process to discuss. The political negotiations have absolutely not been finalized since 25 February. Subsequently, the PLC issued a very strong message to the world asking for an answer. If the world is concerned about the peace process, why does it keep silent about its collapse?

Palestinian Affairs: Legislative Council Sets Up Standing Committees

JN0404171396 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1300 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Legislative Council's session today focused on setting up the Council's standing committees, which cover all of the Council's activities. There are 11 committees. The Council today set up the following committees:

The Legal Committee, which comprises: 'Azzam al-Ahmad, 'Abd-al-Jawad Salih, Abu-'Ali Shahin ['Abd-al-'Aziz Shahin], 'Abd-al-Karim Abu-Salah, Ra'fat al-Najjar, Sulayman Abu-Sunaynah, Ziyad Abu-Zayyad, Sulayman al-Rumi, Muhammad al-Hurani, Faraj al-Sarrat, and Rafiq al-Natshah. Council Speaker Ahmad Quray' said this committee will discuss all legislations and study all complaints made by citizens.

The Political Committee, which comprises: Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, 'Azzam al-Ahmad, Hasan 'Asfur, Rafiq al-Natshah, 'Abd-al-Jawad Salih, 'Imad al-Faluji, Marwan Kanafani, Ziyad Abu-'Amr, Ahmad al-Dik, Rawiyah al-Shawwa, Hanan 'Ashrawi, Marwan al-Barghuthi, 'Ali al-Qawasimi, Jalal Salamah, Muhammad al-Hurani, Intisar al-Wazir, Sa'ib 'Urayqat, 'Azmi al-Shu'aybi, and Hasan Khurayshah.

The Jerusalem Committee, which comprises: Rafiq al-Natshah, Emile al-Jarju'i, Ahmad al-Batsh, Hatim 'Abd-al-Qadir, Ahmad Hashim Zaghayyir, Sa'ib 'Urayqat, Intisar al-Wazir, Fu'ad 'Id, Sallum 'Umran, Hanan 'Ashrawi, Ziyad Abu-Zayyad, Bisharah Dawud, and Ahmad Nasr.

The Education and Social Affairs committee, which comprises: Yusuf Abu-Safiyah, Wajih Yaghi, Ahmad al-Dik, Jawad al-Tibi, Marwan al-Barghuthi, Musa Abu-Sabhah, Musa al-Za'but, Jalal Salamah, Ahmad Nasr, Burhan Jarrar, Salah al-Ta'mari, Hisham 'Abd-al-Raziq, Mu'awiyah al-Masri, Marwan Kanafani, Riyad al-Za'nun, 'Ali al-Qawasimi, Qaddurah Faris, Mufid 'Abd-Rabbuh, Karam Zarandah, Sulayman al-Rumi, Fu'ad 'Id, 'Abd-Rabbuh Abu-'Awn, Fakhri al-Turkuman, Hasan Khurayshah, Ibrahim al-Habbash, 'Uthman Ghashshash, Sa'di al-Kurunz, Zahran Abu-Qubaytah, and 'Ali Abu-al-Rish.

The Committee on the Palestinians in the Diaspora, which comprises: Jamal al-Shawbaki, Jamal al-Hindi, Mufid 'Abd-Rabbuh, Bisharah Dawud, Ziyad Abu-'Amr, Husam Khadr, Muhammad Hijazi, Jawad al-Tibi, Sa'di al-Kurunz, Jalal Salamah, Kamil al-Afghani, Fakhri al-Turkuman, 'Ali Abu-al-Rish, and Karam Zarandah.

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The Lands and Settlements Committee, which comprises: As'ad 'Abd-al-Qadir who is also known as Salah al-Ta'mari, Dawud al-Zir, Qaddurah Faris, Hasan 'Asfur, Zahran Abu-Qubaytah, 'Uthman Ghashshash, Jamilah Saydam, Mufid 'Abd-Rabbuh, Hatim 'Abd-al-Qadir 'Id, Husam Khadr, Hasan Khurayshah, Muhammad al-Hurani, Abu-'Ali Shahin, 'Abd-al-Jawad Salih, and Ziyad Abu-Zayyad.

The Natural Resources Committee, which comprises: Hikmat Zayd, Salah al-Ta'mari, Yusuf Abu-Safiyah, 'Abd-Rabbuh Abu-'Awn, Ibrahim al-Habbash, Ahmad Zughayyar, 'Uthman Ghashshash, 'Abd-al-Rahman Hamad, Jalal al-Mu'addar, Riyad al-Za'nun, Jamal al-Shawbaki, Jawad al-Tibi, Hashim Daraghmah, and Ahmad Rushayd.

The Council will continue to discuss business on its agenda, which includes a number of political, economic, and security topics. The Council members will also discuss draft resolutions presented by the Legal Committee calling on Israel to complete the implementation of the provisions of the agreement, particularly redeployment in the rural areas and in Hebron.

Palestinian Affairs: Legislative Council Concludes Session, Issues Decisions

JN0404205696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 4 Apr 96

[Report by Rashid Hilal in Ramallah]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian Legislative Council [PLC], which convened at the premises of the Education Ministry in Ramallah for two days, concluded its meetings. At the end of the session, PLC Speaker Ahmad Quray', also known as Abu-'Ala', held a news conference at the Council's Hall. He said that the PLC delineated its path and actual role, in its capacity as a basic and independent authority, in terms of drawing up regulations and legislature, monitoring the performance of the National Authority, and contributing to building the homeland.

Abu-'Ala' said that at the beginning of its meetings, the PLC listened to a comprehensive report presented by His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat on the political, economic, and security dimensions of the overall situation. The report also dealt with all repercussions of the Israeli siege imposed on the Palestinian territories. It also touched on the continuous Israeli settlement activity.

The PLC issued four decisions relating to the current situation. These are:

First—Democratic dialogue among all Palestinian political and intellectual forces should be encouraged and deepened with the aim of maintaining Palestinian national unity and the Palestinian National Authority [PNA], which is a national achievement on the path of establishing the independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. The higher national interests of the Palestinian people should be maintained. Their security, stability, and territorial integrity should be safeguarded.

Second—The PLC urges the PNA to ask the Israeli Government to respect and adhere to the letter and spirit of the agreements it signed with the PLO.

Third— The PLC urges the PNA to ask the Israeli Government to immediately stop confiscation of lands in all areas under the pretext of security to build a security wall, expand settlements, and build bypass roads. It also urges calling on Israel to fully adhere to the text of the agreement; complete implementation of the agreement, particularly with regard to releasing all prisoners; and immediately stop arrests, storming of houses, and expelling Gaza Strip students from the West Bank. The PLC stresses that the West Bank and Gaza Strip constitute a geopolitical unity. It also calls for urging Israel to build the safe passage between the West Bank and Gaza Strip and to lift the siege and closure against the PNA areas. The PLC also demands immediate implementation of the agreements signed between the Israeli Government and the PLO, particularly regarding withdrawal from Hebron, completion of redeployment in other West Bank areas, and implementation of the crossings agreement to pave the way for the final-status talks. The PLC asks the PNA to follow up these issues and keep it informed of what is done in that respect.

Fourth—Palestinian parliamentary delegations will be dispatched to Arab and friendly countries to explain developments in the Palestinian territories in light of Israel's practices and lack of commitment to the peace process.

The PLC also issued decisions on the economic conditions, voicing support for the PNA's emergency steps on the Arab and international levels to address the choking economic crisis facing the Palestinian people. The PLC also issued decisions on its administrative and organizational aspects. It formed 11 basic committees, including the Political Committee; the Legal Committee; Jerusalem Committee; Budget Committee; Natural Resources Committee; Lands and Settlements Committee; Committee on the Palestinians in the Diaspora; Committee on Internal Affairs, Security, and Local Government Control; Human Rights, and Freedoms Committee; and Committee on Education, Social Affairs, Youths, Women, and Arts.

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The PLC will convene at the hall of the Education Ministry in Ramallah at 1030 next Wednesday [10 April].

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat, Butrus-Ghali Discuss Political Developments

JN0404141296 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1300 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat and UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus-Ghali spoke on the telephone today. They discussed the latest political developments and the Palestinian request to include the subject of the Israeli military siege against the Palestinians on the UN Security Council's agenda.

'Arafat also received a telephone call from Jordanian Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti. They discussed the negative consequences resulting from the continuation of the Israeli policy of punishment against the Palestinian people.

Palestinian Affairs: Delegation To Meet With Hamas Leaders on Ending Attacks

TA0504054296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 5 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Palestinian Authority [PA] reports a budget deficit of $70 million in the first two months of 1996 and warns that by the end of the year there will be a shortfall of $300 million. Muhammad al-Nashashibi, who holds the finance portfolio in the PA, said that the reason for the deficit was the closure on the territories and the failure of the countries who had pledged support to keep their promises. He said that the PA had not received any funds from the donor states for more than five months. At the conference held three months ago in Paris, a total of $900 million was pledged to the PA.

A group of Palestinian mediators says it will travel to Jordan tomorrow to meet with several leaders of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and try to persuade them to halt attacks against Israel. Marwan al-Barghuthi, a member of Fatah in the Palestinian legislative council, said the committee would make efforts to reduce tension over the crackdown on Hamas in the West Bank and Gaza. He said it would ask Hamas to stop military action, adding that this was the wish of all political groups in the territories. Committee members said they would hold talks with Hamas leaders Ibrahim Ghawshah, Khalid Mash'al, and Muhammad Nazzal in Jordan.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0500 GMT on 5 April adds that "our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that the Palestinian delegation is leaving for Jordan with the approval of Yasir 'Arafat. Marwan al-Barghuthi, the secretary general of the Fatah movement in the West Bank, told our correspondent that the resumption of the dialogue and the release of Hamas activists arrested by the PA would be made conditional on a commitment by the Hamas leadership abroad to halt terrorist attacks against Israel."]

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Military Wing Said Opposed to Resuming Talks With PA

TA0504100896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 5 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam, the military wing of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], is opposed to the resumption of the dialogue between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas. This declaration appeared in a communique sent to a Jerusalem news service today. [passage omitted]

In its communique, the Hamas military wing says that Yasir 'Arafat must call a halt to all the activities against the Islamic movement and issue an official apology.

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Algeria

Algeria: President Addresses Cabinet Meeting

LD0304215696 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 3 Apr 96

[FBIS Summary] Algerian President Liamine Zeroual chaired a cabinet meeting today. In his statement at the meeting, President Zeroual recalled the recent adoption of the government's program by the National Transitional Council which, he said, was a new element in the national political scene and through which democracy has been consolidated in the country.

President Zeroual then urged the government to adhere to the strict implementation of its program and to encourage the involvement of all national social partners in this task. He praised the way the debate of the government's program was conducted at the National Transitional Council and the wide coverage the national media devoted to the event.

The cabinet then heard a report by the prime minister, who reviewed the activities of the government since its last meeting. The cabinet also heard reports by the foreign minister, the interior minister, and the finance minister.

Following the report of the foreign minister, the newsreader said: "The president particularly urged the government to pay great attention to the preparation of the negotiations with the European Union. The president charged the prime minister with the task of coordinating these preparations and closely follow the different stages of the negotiations aiming at achieving an agreement to which the president gives utmost importance as this cooperation instrument will have a significant impact on the future of our national economy."

The cabinet adopted the supplementary budget and a draft bill on the administrative reform of the supreme court. Zeroual spoke again to stress the importance of the national justice system, of respect for law, and of the need to strengthen the credibility of the state and its institutions.

Algeria: Balance of Trade Figures Reported

LD0404222696 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Algerian exports in 1995 reached more than $8 billion, covering 87 percent of the imports. The EU represents a principal client for Algeria, while the commercial links between Algeria and the Arab countries remain weak to the extent that they only represented 0.3 percent. Yacmine Chihab reports:

[Chihab] The agency for promoting and supporting investments pointed out in its report that the balance of trade had registered a trade deficit estimated at more than $1.5 billion 1995, in comparison with $864 million in 1994.

Over the same period, the imports witnessed an increase of 10 percent, and the exports also registered an increase of six percent.

According to the report of the agency for promoting and supporting investments, the structure of the imports was characterized by the domination of products devoted for the management of the means of production at the rate of 31 percent. Food products occupied the second position in the structure of the imports at more than $2 billion, i.e. equivalent to 26 percent of the totality of the imports.

But, the exports of foodstuffs remained weak, where they only represent 0.9 percent of the overall exported products.

The same situation is nearly witnessed by the exports of consumption materials and equipment, and semi-manufactured materials at modest percentages. This makes the policy of subsidizing exports outside the hydrocarbon sector face some difficulties.

It is worth pointing out that the EU represents 40 percent of the overall Algerian imports, followed by the cooperation and economic development organization at 25 percent. As for the Arab countries, they represent only one percent of Algeria's imports.

Concerning the exports, the EU also represents the most important client for Algeria which is financially worth over $5 billion, i.e. at a rate reaching 65 percent.

The trade relations between Algeria and the rest of the Arab countries remain weak, where they do not exceed 0.3 percent of Algeria's exports.

Algeria: Anouar Haddam on 'Two Trends' Within FIS

MM0404115396 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 4 Apr 96 p 4

[Report by Muhammad Sadiq: "Haddam: Rabeh Kebir Belongs to the 'Desperate' Trend in the Algerian Salvation Front"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington — Anouar Haddam, head of the Parliamentary Mission of the Algerian [Islamic] Salvation Front [FIS] Abroad, has condemned the kidnapping of the seven French monks in Algeria. Everyone knows, he said, that the kidnapped persons enjoyed good relations with the people of the area and

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nobody believes that any of the latter had anything to do with the kidnapping.

In an interview with AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Washington yesterday, he said that the recent dialogue initiative launched by President Liamine Zeroual is bound to fail because it excluded the FIS. He emphasized that "any initiative which excludes the FIS, the main party in Algeria, will fail."

Confirming the existence of two trends in the FIS, Haddam said: "After the message addressed to President Zeroual by some FIS members it became apparent to the public that there are two trends. The first lost hope of keeping the military institution out of the political arena, and its leaders, including Ali Djeddi, Rabah Kebir, and Abdelkader Boukhamkham, began to seek cooperation with the regime, which is based on the military institution. The second trend believes that it is possible to continue the military and political efforts to get the military institution out of the political arena and make it accept an elected civilian political authority in the context of party pluralism." He added: "That is the trend loyal to the original line of the FIS led by Shaykh Abbassi Madani and Ali Belhadj."

Addressing the first trend, Haddam said: "We ask those who despaired of keeping the military institution out of the political arena not to discourage those who still believe that getting the military institution out of the political arena is still possible and who believe that it is possible to replace the regime based on the military institution with a regime based on respect for the foundations of the Algerian state as stipulated in the 1 November 1954 statement, that is a regime based on respect for Algeria's identity which is Islam, Arabism, and Thamazighth [Berber], and on respect for party pluralism, fundamental freedoms, respect for human rights, and noninterference of the military institution in political affairs."

In reply to a question about the first trend's insistence that it represents the FIS, Haddam said: "We are the FIS' genuine line represented by Shaykh Abbassi Madani and Shaykh Ali Belhadj." He added: "The trend which has despaired of confronting the regime should, if they wish, go back to the El-Nahdah Movement, and they are our brothers in Islam."

He added that "the genuine line which we represent has, from the beginning and in the words of Shaykh Madani, Shaykh Belhadj, and the Executive Bureau leadership, maintained that the regime based on the military institution should end."

On the "genuine" trend's rejection of dialogue and negotiation with the regime, Haddam said: "The genuine trend, while believing in the need to change the regime, is willing to go to the negotiating table in pursuit of a just and comprehensive political solution. Here we ask: How could a trend advocating that be accused of extremism?"

He reaffirmed that the FIS did, from the beginning, and still does condemn and deplore extremism and terrorism and it condemns the killing or kidnapping of innocent people, but, at the same time, it has a right to uphold the people's right to their institutions. He said that the regime should state its position on the terrorism and terrorist operations carried out by the special forces. When told that the Rome Covenant has been overtaken by the realities and changes, Haddam replied: "We deny that totally and we call upon and want the regime to clarify its position on the Rome Covenant and the 1 November 1954 statement."

Asked about the parties and figures who have responded to or are likely to respond to President Zeroual's initiative, Haddam said: "We hope that those who respond to Zeroual's invitation will seek from him a clear stand on the principles I have mentioned which were included in the National Covenant and which deal with the foundations of the Algerian state, the foundations of the Algerian identity, respect for the people's real choice, partisan pluralism, rotation of power, respect for the fundamental freedoms and for human rights, and noninterference of the Army in political affairs."

He added: "We also ask them to realize that FIS has a genuine legitimate leadership represented by Shaykh Madani and Shaykh Belhadj, and no political solution is imaginable without the two shaykhs. The solution, therefore, lies in allowing the FIS leaderships to meet with the two shaykhs as a first step and then allowing the FIS leaderships to meet with the mujahideen leaderships loyal to the genuine trend of FIS in the presence of the two shaykhs."

He repeated that "the Parliamentary Mission, which led the FIS in the Rome discussions, is still willing to enter Algeria to meet with the two shaykhs with a view to finding a solution regarding the points I have mentioned, as requested in Stockholm last February."

Haddam added: "If the desperate trend claims that the two shaykhs agree with their line, then why are the two shaykhs still isolated and kept away and why are contacts with them, especially Belhadj, not allowed?"

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Algeria: Security Forces Kill 4 in Algiers Shoot-Out

LD0404140196 Paris Radio France International in French 1230 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Algerian security forces killed four alleged Islamists, including a woman, in a shoot-out in the center of Algiers. The Algiers-based paper LIBERTE reported that the incident took place yesterday.

Egypt

Egypt: Mubarak on Terrorism, Summit, Israeli Reactor

NC0404191096

[FBIS Report] Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic at 1230 GMT on 4 April carries a 26-minute recording of Information Minister Safat al-Sharif's remarks on President Husni Mubarak's statements after inaugurating a military judiciary complex today, 4 April.

According to al-Sharif, President Mubarak said and did the following:

Mubarak inaugurated the Military Judiciary building and was briefed on the new building's facilities. Mubarak said that, through the military judiciary, the Armed Forces played a role in confronting terrorism and that the military judiciary shouldered this responsibility as part of the "greater responsibility and immense tasks" shouldered by the Egyptian civilian judiciary. Mubarak said terrorism cases were heard by the military judiciary to alleviate the burden on the civilian judiciary.

Mubarak answered questions from members of the military judiciary and Armed Forces commanders on the Sharm al-Shaykh conference. Mubarak explained that he agreed to hold the peacemakers summit in Sharm al-Shaykh to save the peace process after it suffered serious setbacks. Mubarak said the conference was mainly held to "save the peace process, consolidate security and stability for all parties, and confront terrorism, which represents a danger to the peace process and its parties."

Mubarak noted that he declared in 1986 that terrorism had become an international phenomenon, and had called for holding an international conference to combat it.

President Mubarak revealed the contacts that were made before the conference, explaining that he defined a number of points before the conference: 1. He refused to have the conference be a regional one. 2. He welcomed the holding of an international conference "not on terrorism but to rescue the peace process." 3. The conference's agenda "must be defined in advance and clear."

Mubarak said: "I sensed response to my proposals from all parties, whether through telephone calls or my meeting with envoys and representatives of the participating countries."

Mubarak said that Egypt "plays its role confident of its ability to serve the causes of its Arab nation with reason, logic, and the ability to convince the international community." Mubarak added: "At the same time, we do not allow the abandonment of higher interests or legitimate rights." Mubarak said that the peacemakers conference had "stemmed the deterioration and foiled the plans of forces that reject peace and depend for their survival on a state of neither-war-nor-peace, to undermine the peace process at the expense of the interests of nations."

President Mubarak answered a question on economic reform and privatization, noting the continuation of economic reform and emphasizing that the decisions and policies of the process are "100 percent Egyptian."

Referring to the 11 April signing, in Cairo, of a declaration making Africa free of weapons of mass destruction, Mubarak said it aims to clear Africa of weapons of mass destruction, "namely nuclear weapons."

Mubarak said that "the signing is a prelude to freeing the Middle East of weapons of mass destruction."

Mubarak also said that the presence of nuclear weapons in the Middle East "does not serve the peace process; is inconsistent with the goals of that process; and violates the desired balance and endangers the entire region."

Mubarak said, further, that Egypt is following with interest reports of a nuclear leak from the Dimona reactor, the danger of burying waste in Israel, and its effect on groundwater in Israel "before any other place, in view of the nature of the terrain."

Mubarak is reported to have added that along with other world centers, Egyptian scientific centers are closely monitoring readings of radiation pollution, whether from the Dimona reactor or from the waste. Mubarak also "stressed" freedom of the press, saying: "I believe in the freedom of press and do not allow intervention in its affairs." Mubarak said this freedom is governed by journalists' "nationalist conscience and appreciation of social responsibility, and maintaining a balance between freedom and responsibility."

On the call for an international conference on terrorism, Mubarak noted that he had called for holding such a conference in 1986 "when terrorism was still in the

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bud." Mubarak pointed out that he had warned of the danger of "people who encourage terrorism, who are hesitant to confront it, who simply stand by and watch, or who think that terrorism is far removed from them and thus open their territory up to terrorists." Mubarak added that he had warned that such people will suffer the consequences and "pay a high price after it is too late."

Mubarak added that this had then happened, and that the entire world had come under "waves of terrorism," noting that "serious incidents" took place in the United States, Britain, France, Italy, Spain, Turkey, Japan, Algeria, and other countries.

Mubarak said: "The call still stands. The conference must confront and prevent the residence of fugitive murderers in countries under various political names. The aim is to prevent terrorism from using these countries' institutions for financing, and to prevent the use of certain countries' territory for training or armament."

Egypt: Mubarak Discusses Fate of Muslim 'Militants' in Interview

NC0404204596 Paris AFP in English 1814 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, April 4 (AFP) — Sudanese authorities may have killed one of three Moslem militants sought by the United Nations to hide evidence of links to Khartoum, Egyptian President Husni Mubarak said in an interview Thursday [4 April].

"It is possible he was killed under torture to cover up evidence" of Sudanese involvement in the June 26 attempted assassination of Mubarak in Addis Ababa, the president said, quoted by the government daily AL-AHRAM.

"We heard about his death two or three weeks after June 26, but have heard nothing about it since," Mubarak said without providing any details.

Asked about reports that Egypt had received the other two militants, Mubarak said: "Sudan has not handed over anyone."

Sudan may face international sanctions for not handing over to Ethiopia the three Egyptian militants, who Addis Ababa says Khartoum has been harboring after they plotted the failed attack on Mubarak.

The UN passed a resolution in late January giving Sudan 60 days to turn over the fugitives and "stop supporting terrorism" and last month Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali gave a negative report of Khartoum's compliance.

Mubarak said Egypt does "not want to punish the Sudanese people. We don't want them to suffer like Libya," which has languished the past four years under UN sanctions. "We want the Security Council to find a way to force the Sudanese regime to apply its resolutions," Mubarak said.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sayyid Qasim al-Masri said Tuesday Cairo had helped draw up a draft resolution imposing a ban on Sudan Airways flights but which "does not isolate Sudan from the outside world".

"Egypt is intent not to harm the Sudanese people, and so we rejected any economic or military sanctions," he said.

US ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, said Wednesday that Washington wanted the draft resolution toughened to make sure it is as "strong as it possibly can be."

In Sudan, newspapers hailed Egypt's stand against harsh economic sanctions as a sign of an easing of tension between the two countries. Egypt was one of the Non-Aligned bloc which put the original condemnation resolution before the Security Council in January. The independent AL-RA'Y AL-AKHAR newspaper said such the Egyptian position as well as a call by Sudan's spiritual leader Hasan al-Turabi for a rapprochement marked a "new turning point" in relations.

The two neighbours are at odds over Egyptian accusations that Sudan shelters Moslem militants waging a campaign to overthrow Mubarak's government, and a dispute over the border region of Hala'ib.

Egypt: Envoy to UN Refuses Economic, Military Sanctions on Sudan

NC0504105896 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0500 GMT 5 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ambassador Nabil al-'Arabi, Egypt's permanent envoy to the United Nations, has stressed that Egypt will not accept imposition of economic or military sanctions on Sudan that may harm the Sudanese people's interests or help partition Sudan. In an interview with the Voice of America, he said that the Security Council discussed a draft resolution on Sudan and the failure of the Khartoum government to implement resolution 1,044. He noted that the Nonaligned Countries submitted a draft resolution imposing three diplomatic sanctions: 1. Reducing the number of diplomatic missions in Khartoum. 2. Restricting the issuance of visas to Sudanese Government officials and Armed Forces personnel. 3. Refraining from holding international or regional conferences in Sudan.

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Al-'Arabi said that the draft resolution was discussed and will be discussed again at the beginning of next week. He noted that Egypt cannot accept any economic sanctions against Sudan because they will harm the Sudanese people and Egypt absolutely refuses to participate in any action that may harm the Sudanese people's interests.

Egypt: Committee Meetings With Tunisia End; Al-Sharif Comments

NC0404193496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1620 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 4 Apr (MENA)—The Higher Egyptian-Tunisian Committee held its final session today when Prime Minister Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri and Tunisian Prime Minister Dr. Hamed Karoui signed the minutes of the committee meetings.

Five agreements on bilateral cooperation, a program of scientific and technical cooperation in agriculture for the year 1997-98, and cooperation in communications were signed. An executive program for cultural cooperation for the year 1996-97, an executive program for the Egyptian-Tunisian agreement on social affairs for 1996, and a program on cooperation in the fields of youth, sports, and childhood for 1996 were also signed.

It was decided to hold the fifth session of the Higher Egyptian-Tunisian Committee in Tunis in April next year.

Minister of Information Safwat al-Sharif said the higher committee meeting's minutes contained 22 clauses. The first, on political coordination, stresses the continuation of efforts to clear the air among Arabs, consolidate joint Arab action, and support its institutions to serve common Arab causes. Foremost of these, he added, is the Palestinian people's right to regain all their legitimate national rights to liberate the occupied Arab territories.

The second clause deals with economic, investment, and technical cooperation. The committee emphasized the importance of activating the brotherhood agreements signed between the two countries' chambers of commerce and on the exchange of information on trade and investment activity to increase the trade volume between them. [passage omitted]

As regards fiscal cooperation, al-Sharif said, the committee decided to form a committee comprising experts from both countries to discuss coordination and examine the two countries' previous procedures to consolidate fiscal cooperation.

He said the fourth clause covered bilateral industrial cooperation. He added that the committee decided to encourage the establishment of joint industrial projects and to give priority to industries in which both sides enjoy relative advantages enabling them to participate in international competition. [passage omitted]

The information minister said the fifth clause was about cooperation in petroleum and that the higher committee decided to expedite the implementation of the cooperation program signed between the two countries in energy planning and rationalization. [passage omitted]

The ninth clause covered cooperation in transport and communications. As regards road transport, the committee decided to quickly remove obstacles and make the direct land route between the two countries operational again because it helps increase the movement of passengers.

With regard to maritime transport, the committee decided to revive the Joint Liaison Office to serve navigation companies in both countries. As for air transport, the committee decided to continue the current operation as has been agreed and to accommodate more passengers should the traffic increase. [passage omitted]

The 11th clause concerned media cooperation. The committee decided to stimulate the media cooperation program signed by the two countries in 1988 and to consolidate cooperation between the Egyptian General Information Authority and the Tunisian Agency for Foreign Liaison. [passage omitted]

The 14th clause dealt with scientific research and technology. The committee decided to exchange expertise and experts in scientific research, energy, patents, and the desalination of sea water. [passage omitted]

The information minister said the 18th clause covered cooperation in religious affairs. He added that the committee decided to exchange information on procedures followed in both countries to prepare preachers and imams and to participate in Koranic competitions. [passage omitted]

The 21st clause dealt with consular affairs and it was decided to expedite the holding of the first session of the joint consular committee as soon as possible.

The 22d clause dealt with judicial affairs. The committee decided to consolidate cooperation between the Justice Ministries and judicial institutions and to increase the exchange of visits.

Dr. al-Janzuri spoke at the end of the Higher Egyptian-Tunisian Committee's meeting. He expressed his hope that the agreements signed today and discussions during the committee meetings will be a prelude to advancing joint action between the two countries in various spheres.

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He emphasized that political ties between the two countries are at the highest level and urged businessmen on both sides to accelerate cooperation. He asserted that the Egyptian and Tunisian Governments are working to facilitate the tasks of investors and remove obstacles facing them. He expressed his hope that trade between the two countries will be doubled.

Dr. Hamed Karoui expressed satisfaction with the brotherly discussions held during the higher committee meetings and their results.

He noted that relations between Tunisia and Egypt are deeply rooted in culture and history and that they are developing for the better under the auspices of Presidents Husni Mubarak and Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. He emphasized that relations between the two countries are based on understanding, persistent efforts to advance cooperation, and on the belief in the inevitability of joint Arab action.

Egypt: Tunisian Prime Minister Leaves After Visit

NC0404212296 Cairo MENA in Arabic
2100 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 4 Apr (MENA)—Tunisian Prime Minister Dr. Hamed Karoui and his accompanying delegation left Cairo this evening after a 3-day visit to Egypt, during which he met with President Husni Mubarak. Dr. Karoui chaired the Tunisian delegation to the meeting of the Egyptian-Tunisian Higher Joint Committee. He was seen off at the airport by Prime Minister Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri and the staff of the Tunisian Embassy in Cairo.

Egypt: Papers Comment on Perry's Statements, Sanctions on Sudan

NC0504082396 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0600 GMT 5 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 5 Apr (MENA)—The Cairo newspapers for today, Friday 5 April, dedicate their comments and editorials to four major topics. These are: banning nuclear weapons in the Middle East, developments in the peace process in this region, the sanctions the Security Council is considering imposing on Sudan, and the trials of the Bosnian war criminals.

The newspapers highlight in their major headlines and front pages the statements by President Husni Mubarak after inaugurating the Military Judiciary building in Madinat Nasr. In his statements, President Mubarak said that the presence of nuclear weapons in the Middle East does not serve peace or fit in with its objectives. It also destroys the desired balance of power. It poses a danger to the whole region. The papers also highlight his statement that the Sharm al-Shaykh summit thwarted the plans of the antipeace forces.

AL-AKHBAR chief editor Jalal Duwaydar contributes an article headlined: "He Who Is Honest Succeeds." He says: Washington was not expected to take any action to counter the feeling of disappointment that prevailed in the Arab world after announcements in U.S. and Israeli media about preparations for a strategic alliance; but then U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry arrived in Cairo and made statements after his meeting with President Husni Mubarak. These statements came as a surprise to President Mubarak, particularly reports that Perry said there is no nuclear cooperation or secret defense pact with Israel.

In his article in AL-AKHBAR, Duwaydar refers to William Perry's comments about the U.S. commitment to the security of all its friends in the region, including Egypt and Israel. He confirmed that the Egyptian stance is the cornerstone in building peace in the Middle East, as well as in Africa's stability.

However, the writer then notes: In order to avoid answering a question on Washington's stance on Israel's possession of nuclear weapons and the fact that this contradicts the policy of banning nuclear weapons, Perry said: Any regional program to remove nuclear weapons from the region must include all the countries of the region. This means that Washington takes the Israeli viewpoint, which always brings up the Iranian, Pakistani, and Iraqi attempts to acquire nuclear weapons. These accusations could be investigated and dealt with through international organizations, by whose resolutions Israel refuses to abide.

Duwaydar concludes his article saying: At any rate, all these statements seem to be positive, even though I believe that the motive behind the reports that were broadcast about all the dangerous provisions in the U.S.-Israeli alliance is to take the pulse of and measure Egyptian and Arab reaction. How I hope that Washington realizes the insistence of the Arabs, particularly Egypt, on overcoming the dangers of this policy and its blatant bias toward Israel. I have no comments to make about the U.S. stance except to quote the saying that goes "He who is honest succeeds." [passage omitted]

AL-JUMHURIYAH dedicates its editorial to Egypt's stance on the sanctions the Security Council is considering imposing on Sudan. The newspaper asserts that Egypt does not want to punish the Sudanese people. Under the headline "There Is No Forgiveness for the Conspiracy," the paper says that Egypt has never planned to attack or conspire against any fraternal Arab country. That is why there was such shock and pain when it was discovered that the Sudanese regime was deeply

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involved in the vile and sly conspiracy of the Addis Ababa incident.

The paper adds: Egypt has stood firm in the face of major international conspiracies with great might and courage. God decreed success and victory for Egypt because it stands for justice in the face of injustice. If a spirit of revenge and vindictiveness had prevailed in Egypt after the insidious Addis Ababa incident, the ruling regime in Khartoum would have paid a high price for its crime.

The paper adds: But Egypt adhered to the spirit of common sense and concern for Sudan out of its firm belief and conviction that the ruling regime in Sudan will soon be eliminated, God willing. That regime has gone against the Sudanese people; and today the streets of Khartoum and Omdurman are witnessing great agitation. In addition there is the civil war in the south.

The newspaper adds: No matter what the issue, the hour of reckoning with the conspiratorial and conniving regime of al-Turabi and al-Bashir has come. The reckoning will not be one-dimensional this time, but will come from two sides. The first will be from the Sudanese people themselves, and the second from the international community through the sanctions that will be imposed on the Khartoum regime if the terrorists involved in the Addis Ababa incident are not handed over.

AL-JUMHURIYAH concludes its editorial: President Husni Mubarak has affirmed many times that Egypt does not want to punish the Sudanese people. But Egypt will not back down on the need to implement the international resolutions. There is no doubt regarding Egypt's ability to mobilize the whole international community against the treacherous and conspiratorial regime in Khartoum. Egypt will not show any leniency regarding the conspiracy or forfeit any of its rights. Nor will Egypt change its stance on Arab justice and security. [passage omitted]

Libya

Libya: Egypt's Foreign Minister Arrives To Discuss Talks With U.S.

LD0404220296 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 2100 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Egyptian Foreign Affairs Minister 'Amr Musa arrived this evening in Libya following the accusation against Tripoli by the American Secretary of Defense William Perry that Tripoli was adopting a program for the production of chemical weapons.

Sources at the Egyptian Foreign Affairs Ministry said that 'Amr Musa would brief the Libyan president [as heard], Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, on the contents of the talks which U.S. Secretary of Defense Perry, had held in Cairo. [passage omitted]

Libya: JANA Criticizes Perry's Weapons Remarks

LD0404182096 Tripoli JANA in English 1753 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo Al-Tayr [April] 4 — JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY — The American war minister was reported to have said during a press conference held in Cairo yesterday that he will express his deep concern towards what he claims is the Libyan chemical weapons programme.

The NEW YORK TIMES quoted the American war minister as saying that America will intensify what he described as pressures on Libya to force it to stop its programme of chemical weapons as he described it.

The statement of the American minister of war comes within the pattern of the continued vicious American campaigns against Libya using as usual false pretexts and flimsy excuses in an attempt to undermine Libya's principled positions.

Undoubtedly the aggressive and provocative style which the American Government persisted in using is no more than an attempt to put a smokescreen to cover up the greater evil represented by the Israeli terrorists in the Arab area with their huge arsenal of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. These weapons threaten the whole area with annihilation.

Observers are wondering about the objectives behind these formal American statements made in an Arab country at this particular time and specifically from America which is providing all forms of moral, physical and technical support for the Israeli enemy, to promote their internationally outlawed weapons. All kinds of lies and excuses are being fabricated to cover up the failure of the Israeli enemy to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Israelis refusal to allow international atomic energy agencies to inspect their nuclear arsenal.

Observers have confirmed that the issuing of such malicious statements in a country linked with distinguished relations with the Great Jamahiriyah only means that it is intended to stir up conflict amongst brothers.

It is worth noting that such American statements are exposed because they come at a time when the people of the Arab nation live in continued fear and terror because the reports by experts and specialists in more than one Arab country about nuclear radiation from the Israeli nuclear reactors which threaten the destruction of the whole region.

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Such imminent dangers have also been confirmed by Egyptian experts and officials.

The observers warned about the vicious campaign launched by America against the Libyan Arab medical factory in al-Rabitah. The whole world was able to establish the facts about this huge medical factory and delegations from various parts of the world visited the factory and exposed the fraudulent American allegations.

But the question which is still fresh in the minds of observers is the question of when the world will listen to America talking about the huge nuclear arsenal in the possession of the Israeli enemy as America does not stop persisting in issuing allegations against Arabs to the extent that provokes nausea and suspicion.

Libya: U.S. Concern About Chemical Weapons Dismissed as 'Conspiracy Theory'

MM0404150096 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 4 Apr 96 p 9

[Unattributed article: "Selective Concern"]

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. press sources said yesterday that Washington is "concerned" about Libya continuing to produce chemical weapons.

The remarks, attributed to U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry, on "continued U.S. pressure on Libya to halt its program for developing chemical weapons," adds nothing new to the lost love between Washington and Tripoli, and does not bring the neutral observer any closer to ascertaining the accuracy of the reports on the development of chemical weapons by Libya.

In the past, as some may recall, military aircraft hit Libya in the wake of accusations relating to the Berlin night club blast, when the U.S. and British authorities confirmed that they had concrete evidence proving Tripoli's involvement. However, later the accusations were directed at other suspects and the Libyan involvement theory was dropped. Later, Libya was accused again, of developing chemical weapons in factories which Tripoli says are either medical laboratories or factories for ordinary chemicals. It is still difficult to decide whether the accusations are true or false in view of the inability to obtain categorical proof.

Hence, we say that Perry's remarks about U.S. pressure are nothing new. The same applies to threats by the U.S. Defense Department, the Pentagon, that "it does not rule out a possible raid" on the factory in Tarhunah (65 kms southeast of Tripoli), should economic and diplomatic pressure fail.

The truth of the matter is that, if it is true that Libya is developing chemical weapons, it would be embarrassing itself and its Arab sisters by doing so and exposing its territory to a totally unwarranted aggression. Libya does not need chemical weapons and does not have enemies directly on its borders, imposing such an armament program on it. It would be better to invest the vast sums allocated for the chemical weapons program — if such a program does exist — in development schemes, whether in Libya itself or in our Arab world which craves development support.

On the other hand, the impartial observer can only wonder at the selective "concern" about armament, when this relates to the Arab world or the Middle Eastern states, since during the whole of last week, we did not hear of any western "concern" about Israeli nuclear weapons and the threat to the environment, despite the rising regional — and even Israeli — doubts about the safety of Israel's Dimona nuclear reactor.

Regrettably, this not only justifies the ordinary Arab citizen's anger at finding that he is guilty without trial and without an attorney, but also reinforces the general feeling that the conspiracy theory is always plausible as long as the Arab world is in the limelight.

Libya: Delegation to UN Denounces West's Position on Lockerbie

LD0404201996 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1925 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] NEW YORK, 4 Apr — The Great Jamahiriyah's delegation at the United Nations has rejected the contents of the statement recently issued by the three states [United States, United Kingdom, France] concerned with the so-called Lockerbie case.

In a letter presented to the UN secretary general, the delegation of the Great Jamahiriyah said that the statement by these states showed the extent of their obduracy and their insistence in obstructing the general trend of the majority of the UN Security Council member countries that appreciate the efforts of the Great Jamahiriyah to find a just solution to the so-called Lockerbie case.

In its letter, the Great Jamahiriyah's delegation at the United Nations stressed that the positions of the Great Jamahiriyah on this issue was supported unanimously by international and regional organizations, and it underlined that the obduracy of these states meant only that they were using the tragedy of the victims of the airliner and the seven-year long suffering of their families for political purposes, with the aim of harming the Arab Libyan people.

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In its letter, the Great Jamahiriyah delegation urged the UN Security Council to look for an appropriate solution to this dispute, which would take into account the interests of the families of the victims and those of the Libyan Arab people . The delegation further stressed that if the obduracy of the three states continued, then the Security Council should lift the unjust measures against the Great Jamahiriyah, which are now in contradiction with the will of the international community.

Sudan

Sudan: Khartoum University Students Torch Cars, Damage Buildings

NC0404140596 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Today, rioting increased at Khartoum University after students torched a number of cars and damaged some university buildings.

The acts of violence between supporters and opponents of the government started at the university on Tuesday [2 April] when the students attacked each other with stones and the police intervened to separate them.

Sudan: Updates Reported on University Disturbances

AB0404140296 London BBC World Service in English 0630 GMT 4 Apr 96

[From the "Network Africa" program hosted by Rick Wells]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Wells] There were vital scenes at universities in the Sudanese capital Khartoum yesterday when clashes between students were broken up by police firing tear gas. There has been quite a number of incidents recently involving fundamentalist students who support the government of Hasan al-Bashir and those who oppose it. Just a short while ago, I spoke to our correspondent in Khartoum, Alfred Taban.

[Begin recording] [Taban] Last night when I was there, there was a very strong presence of the security forces, and you had riot police on lorries and on small vehicles.

[Wells] And they were just in position on the campus?

[Taban] Oh yes, they were in position. Of course, there were disturbances earlier on in the day and apparently they were expecting more, so they were waiting, standing by, but there were very few students on campus.

[Wells] Well, have there been any comments so far from the university authorities on these troubles?

[Taban] Oh yes, the vice chancellor of the university, Professor Hashim Ahmad al-Hadi, issued a statement last night in which he condemned the incidents of the last two days. He said he was terminating the role of the committee charged with the student elections and he said he was appointing the dean of students to be in charge of conducting elections at the appropriate time. One thing about this incident is that it is sure that the problems were much more than most people had thought, because he said vehicles and university property were destroyed during the riots.

[Wells] What's really behind the trouble? Is it internal student politics? Was it part of a kind of wider national trend, do you think?

[Taban] Well, essentially it started as an internal students' dispute. You know, they are conducting elections these days, and one group of students wanted the votes to be counted at the various faculties. Another group wanted the ballot boxes to be taken to the main premises of the university students union for counting of votes to be conducted. So, this was essentially the start of the problem, but later on it took on a political turn when some of the students began to shout antigovernment slogans.

[Wells] So, it has become a kind of battle between pro and antigovernment students?

[Taban] Yes, indeed, that's what it looks like now. [end recording]

Sudan: SPLA Claims Capture of Another Government Garrison

AB0404175896 London BBC World Service in English 1505 GMT 4 Apr 96

[From the "Focus on Africa" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The rebel SPLA [Sudan People's Liberation Army] in southern Sudan has this week being claiming more successes in its latest offensive against government forces in the east of the country on the Ethiopian border. The rebels say they have taken control of the garrison town of Fashimi in southern Blue Nile Province. They say it fell without a fight. So Josephine Hazely asked the SPLA spokesman in Nairobi, George Garang, how they came to capture Fashimi:

[Begin recording] [Garang] What happened in Fashimi is the first time it is believed government garrison has surrendered voluntarily through negotiations between our forces. The SPLA contacted the government garrison in Fashimi for a negotiated withdrawal of the government troops. So on the 31st, they agreed to withdraw and they also agreed that they will share the trucks

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which were there and the weaponry which were in that place. In that agreement, the government troops were allowed to travel with only one truck, in a heavy truck which they took along with them, carrying their personnel belongings and the other two trucks were left to the SPLA, plus all the heavy weaponry that were there.

[Hazely] Now, but listen, it sounds incredible, very incredible that government garrison would simply walk away from a town they have been occupying. That is unbelievable.

[Garang] That is what has happened and I understand most people in this regard, maybe in Europe or maybe in America, may not agree on this, but historically this is what happened.

[Hazely] What is it you in the SPLA told these government soldiers that got their agreement to vacate Fashimi? What is it you must have told them?

[Garang] What we have told them is that what it is. That the government in Khartoum is killing them. In fact they don't have enough ammunition, they do not have enough rations, and the cause that they are fighting for is not worthwhile and we are calling on other garrisons in southern Sudan, in the southern Blue Nile, to do likewise.

[Hazely] Well, how come, if this is true, if this is true that you have taken Fashimi, and that the government garrison walked away without a fight, how come you know, nobody can confirm this story independently?

[Garang] We have invited foreign journalists and we invite you, Josephine Hazely, to go to these areas and prove to yourself that is what happened. [end recording]

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Kuwait

Kuwait: Deadline for Debt Repayment May Not Be Met

NC0504115296 Paris AFP in English 0809 GMT 5 Apr 96

[Report by Edmund Blair]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kuwait City, April 5 (AFP) — Kuwaiti debtors have until Saturday [6 April] to pay the first installment in a multi-billion debt settlement plan, but only 70 per cent of commitments are expected to be met, bankers and analysts said Friday.

The first of five installments — each worth a total of about 450 million dinars (1.5 billion dollars) — must be paid to local banks by the April 6 deadline, the bankers said.

"Our forecast is for repayment to reach 70 percent," said Jasim al-Sa'dun, general manager of Al-Shal Economic Consultants. He said this figure could be lower still because some debtors expected further measures by the government to ease their burden.

Bankers said more than 100 people were taking legal action against the government and the banks, who are acting as agents in collecting the debts, ahead of the Saturday deadline.

"They are using the argument of 'force majeure' as their defence," one banker said.

By arguing that the cause of indebtedness was beyond their control, they are hoping the government will bail them out further.

Most of the 20 billion dollar debt was incurred as a result of the 1982 crash of the Suq al-Manakh unofficial stock exchange and during the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait between August 1990 and February 1991.

Under complex debts law — approved by parliament in August 1995 — debtors were given the choice to pay in full over a period of 12 years or pay in a five-year time frame with up to 46 percent debt forgiveness.

Of the 4,000 debtors, most have opted to pay over five years. About 2.2 billion dinars (7.4 million dollars) is due by September 2000.

The original deadline for the first installment was December. However, an extra four months were granted on request, but at an extra cost to the debtors.

Some MPs have argued for more lenient treatment of the debtors, warning of a collapse in real estate and share prices as debtors sell assets to meet their obligations.

"But there is no real relation between repayment and share prices," said Jasim al-Sa'dun.

He pointed to the steady rise in the trading and share prices during 1995 and in the first quarter of 1996, even though some repayments were made during that period.

Bankers said the financial markets had also been saved from chaos because debtors acted carefully when liquidating their assets.

"One can say already that it has not caused a hiatus, it has not caused an upset," said one bank manager.

"The next date is six months off. If we see the same careful approach and no ruffled feathers, then I can be quite confident about the remaining installments," he added.

Kuwait: Legislators Study Bill To Establish Human Rights Organization

JN0504095996 Kuwait ARAB TIMES in English 26 Mar 96 p 6

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kuwait city, March 25: The National Assembly's Human Rights Committee convened a meeting on Monday [25 March] to discuss a bill, drawn by the Legal and Legislative Committee, to establish a non-government organization for defending human rights in Kuwait.

Convener of the Human Rights Committee, MP 'Ali al-Baghli said the meeting was attended by MP Ya'qub Hayati, Jasim al-Qatami, the chairman of the Bar Association Jamal al-'Uthman, Mubarak al-'Adwani, and Mubarak al-Mutawwa'.

Al-Baghli said some members of the Human Rights Committee believe it would be an adequate step to establish a non-governmental organization to uphold human rights in the country considering the number of human right activists in Kuwait.

He added that some Legal and Legislative Committee members submitted a bill to establish the organization, as the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor had stopped issuing new permissions to setup such non-governmental organizations.

Stating that the proposed organization would comprise of people working in the human rights field, the MP added that the meeting discussed several recommendations and suggestions conveyed by the attendance.

He said the most important suggestion was to establish a non-governmental organization independent from laws governing charitable societies.

Al-Baghli said several international pacts on human rights, recently signed by Kuwait, encourage the formation of such organizations.

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Guests attending the committee's meeting suggested that the proposed organization include all complicated human rights issues in Kuwait, like detentions and imprisonments imposed on people expressing their thoughts and ideologies.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: Pilgrims Warned Against Carrying Political Literature

LD0504104296 Riyadh SPA in Arabic
0520 GMT 5 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Riyadh, 5 Apr (SPA) — The Interior Ministry has issued a statement, saying that it has noted that some of the brother Muslims arriving to perform ordained pilgrimage are carrying with them literature of a political, propaganda, or ideological nature, a matter which contravenes the noble aim of pilgrimage.

The Ministry stressesd that whoever is found to be in possession of prohibited literature will be severely punished and that the laws of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will be applied without leniency or tolerance. [passage omitted]

The Interior Ministry has noted that a number of brother Muslims arriving in the country, either out of good intentions — which we believe it is, God willing — or out of a desire to exploit the gracious occasion, are carrying literature with a political, propaganda, or ideological objective, which affects some people or directly harms others, a matter which contravenes the noble aim of pilgrimage.

Therefore, the Interior Ministry, acting upon instructions it has received, would like to draw the attention that these things are categorically prohibited. It would like to give the guests of the Compassionate [God] the opportunity to perform their rites with reverence, without being diverted from their worship for which they have come to the Kingdom.

While stressing the aforementioned, the Ministry hopes that all will abide by the statement and will not violate it. Whoever violates it will be subject to punishment and will be sent back to where he came from. In addition, anyone found with prohibited material, regardless of its kind, will to be subject to a deterrent punishment and the laws of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will be applied without leniency or tolerance, because the responsibility of this ministry is to preserve the security of pilgrims and the citizens, and to keep the land of the Kingdom an oasis of goodness and safety for all who seek the Holy House of God or to pay homage to the mosque of his noble prophet. [passage omitted]

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Iraq: Oil-for-Food Talks With UN To Resume 8 Apr

JN0504102896 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0900 GMT 5 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] United Nations, 5 Apr (INA)—The delegations of Iraq and the UN General Secretariat will resume here next Monday [8 April] their technical dialogue on the subject of oil for food, medicine, and basic needs of the Iraqi people.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari and the members of his technical delegation are due to arrive here on Sunday, at a time when UN Secretary General Butrus-Ghali is expected to return from his Asian tour that will end today. Butrus-Ghali is expected to return to New York on Saturday.

Butrus-Ghali held official contacts with Iraqi officials during his tour that began in Geneva, and then led him to France, China, South Korea, and Japan.

While in Geneva, Dr. Butrus-Ghali spoke by phone with Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz and agreed with him to hold the third round of dialogue on Monday 8 April after Dr. Butrus-Ghali's return from his tour to follow up the meetings between the two delegations.

Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf met in Beijing on 27 March with Dr. Butrus-Ghali who was visiting China. Discussions dealt with the progress made in the first and second rounds of the dialogue on oil for food, medicine, and basic needs of the Iraqi people. The two sides expressed desire to continue the dialogue in the third round in a manner that will lead to success.

Butrus-Ghali expressed optimism that an agreement between Iraq and the United Nations will be reached. The United Nations said that the meeting between its secretary general and the Iraqi foreign minister in Beijing was very constructive.

Iraq: 'Aziz Accuses U.S. of Hampering UN Oil-for-Food Talks

BR0504125396 Paris LE MONDE in French 5 Apr 96 p 4

[Report on interview with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz by Jean-Pierre Tuquoi in Baghdad; date not given: "Major Obstacles Hamper 'Oil-for-Food' Talks, Iraq Says"]

[FBIS Translated Text] While the Iraqi population as a whole is convinced that an agreement between Baghdad's rulers and the United Nations will soon ease the embargo which has been in force against the country since 1990, Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz was more cautious in an interview he granted LE MONDE on the premises where Councils of Ministers usually take place. He acknowledges that "important obstacles have been removed" concerning the implementation of Resolution 986, which authorizes the sale by Baghdad of a limited quantity of oil so that it can purchase — subject to strict international control — food and medicines, but "the differences that remain between the two parties are quite large. They have to do with the very integrity and sovereignty of our country."

Reconciling these points of view "could take time," so much so that the actual head of Iraqi diplomacy ['Aziz] does not rule out the need for a fourth round of talks. But he says he is "optimistic." "We are closer to an agreement than before," he hurries to add, puffing on his cigar.

Handled on Iraq's side by Iraq's UNESCO ambassador Abdel Amir El Anbari [name as published], the third round of talks will open on 8 April in New York, as was the case for the previous ones. The main obstacle to an agreement relates to the way food is to be distributed in the three Kurdish governorships in the north of the country that are no longer under Iraqi control. "The UN resolution reaffirms that these provinces are part of Iraq. The agreement must reflect this reality," Tariq 'Aziz says.

"Coincidence"

Based on this principle, Baghdad will not agree to the food distribution system in these three dissident provinces being different from the system which has been in effect in the rest of the country for years. "It has proven benefits and it works well. The population pays a nominal sum for the food, which is allocated in an equitable manner," the deputy prime minister maintains. The wish to extend [the system] to the Kurdish governorships is a "legitimate demand and I have good hopes of convincing a majority of Security Council members that this is so," Tariq 'Aziz adds.

The opening of the new talks will almost coincide with the submission to the Security Council on 11 April of the biannual report of Rolf Ekeus, chairman of the special UN committee monitoring Iraqi disarmament. Is this merely due to chance or do the Iraqis want to find out the "tone" of the report before agreeing to potential compromises? "This is mere coincidence. The date of 8 April was chosen by myself together with the UN secretary general, in accordance with his schedule," Mr 'Aziz maintains.

Similarly, the deputy prime minister rejects the notion that Baghdad "is dragging its feet" because the country does not yet have the equipment needed to export the volume of oil provided for by Resolution 986, that is,

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$2 billion worth of oil every six months. "Once the resolution has been passed, the Iraqis will have six months to export their crude oil," an oil industry expert warns. "If their facilities are not ready on time, they run the risk of having to cut their rates."

"Our traditional customers have remained loyal. Two weeks, four at the most — and Iraq will be ready to resume selling crude oil," the deputy prime minister says.

In fact, according to Tariq 'Aziz, the only obstacle to the embargo being even only partially lifted is the attitude of the United States. "There is the real hindrance," he says. "The United States has been busy behind the scenes, conspiring against Iraq and doing its best to sabotage our efforts."

Does he expect a change of attitude on the part of Washington after the U.S. presidential election? "None whatsoever," he answers, while saying that Republican candidate Robert Dole is the one with the best knowledge of the Middle East. "With other elected repreantatives he visited Iraq in 1990 and met with our president, Saddam Husayn. As for Bill Clinton, he does not know the first thing about the region." Still, Tariq 'Aziz admits that the United States managed to take advantage of the Gulf war to strengthen its trade position in the area. Which is not the case for France. "Your country," he concludes, "has lost much due to the embargo against Iraq. We recognized Kuwait's borders, we destroyed our military capabilities. The embargo is no longer justified. Like Russia, France must acknowledge this, otherwise you will be forfeiting your own economic interests."

Iraq: Rebel Radio Reports Envoys to UN Talks Summoned to Baghdad Recently

JN0404210696 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1745 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Several days ago, the tyrant's collapsing regime in Baghdad summoned its ambassadors in New York: Nizar Hamdun, permanent UN representative; and 'Abd-al-Malik al-Anbari, who heads the regime's delegation to the deadlocked talks on the so-called oil-for-food resolution.

Disclosing this in Baghdad, informed sources said that the tyrant summoned the two officials to dictate to them what to say in New York for the implementation of Resolution 986.

The Kuwaiti newspaper AL-QABAS, which called the Saddamist meetings secret talks, said that Barzan al-Tikriti's visit to Amman several days ago, coincided with the tyrant's meeting with Hamdun and al-Anbari. The paper said that Barzan was following the talks on the ineffectual resolution because of the Baghdad regime's stalling in implementing it.

Nizar Hamdun's visit to Baghdad is the first in a year. However, al-Anbari arrives in Baghdad every now and then to learn methods of deception and maneuvering to delay the pace of the talks on selling limited amounts of Iraqi oil to purchase food and medicine for our starving people.

Iraq: Opposition Group Talks End Without Agreement

NC0504103096 Paris AFP in English 0925 GMT 5 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damascus, April 5 (AFP) — A meeting of 10 Iraqi opposition groups aimed at drawing up an action plan to overthrow President Saddam Husayn has closed in disarray in the Syrian capital.

A spokesman for the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) spoke of "differences between the Kurdish participants and the nationalists over a lifting of the UN embargo" in force since Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

"The Kurds are in favour of a call for a partial lifting of the embargo while the nationalists want a total lifting" of the sanctions, which have caused hardship for the 20-million Iraqi population, the spokesman said.

Another deep split emerged with a boycott of the meeting since Wednesday [3 April] by the Iraqi Communist Party, which blasted Shiite Moslem leaders taking part alongside Kurdish groups.

The communists, headed by Hamid Najib, condemned "the blackmail exerted by the Islamic fundamentalist movements who threatened to abort the meeting if the Communist Party attended."

They were hostile to the "patriotic" opposition movements, and their behaviour "shows all too well the type of regime they want to impose on the Iraqi people in place of Saddam Husayn's dictatorship.

"The battle should be the subject of national concensus in order to overthrow the dictatorship and set up a democratic, multi-party system," the communists said.

The participants at the talks decided to call an expanded meeting of all Iraqi groups opposed to Saddam at a date yet to be fixed. But the communists said again they would not attend.

The talks in Damascus were attended by the Iran-based Shiite groups, the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic

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Revolution in Iraq (SAIRI) and the Islamic Action Organisation (IAO).

The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), which along with its rival PUK has controlled northern Iraq in defiance of Baghdad since 1991, also took part.

Ja'far Muhammad of the IAO said in reaction to the communists' boycott: "It is necessary to unite the various Iraqi opposition movements to be able to replace the Iraqi regime."

But the IAO itself has been split into two wings, with a new branch disputing the leadership of Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi Modaressi.

The Iraqi opposition has already been split by a conflict between the PUK and KDP, and differences between Shiite and Sunni Moslems, Islamic fundamentalists and nationalists.

Iraq: Al-Hakim Describes Opposition Meeting as 'Successful'

JN0504080196 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0500 GMT 5 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] To confirm their chronic contradictions, both old and new, the Iraqi opposition factions concluded their meetings in the Syrian capital, Damascus, yesterday without issuing a final statement. More details are contained in the following report by Thana' al-Imam from Damascus:

[Begin al-Imam recording] Al-Hakim [Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, chairman of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq] described the meeting as successful. He indicated that three basic topics were debated at the meeting. They are the following: Reaching a common political stand on the status of the regime, the Iraqi people, the Iraqi opposition, and regional and international developments; the field course of action in Iraq in terms of future prospects and requirements; and how to benefit from the uninvolved opposition factions.

Al-Hakim confirmed that a follow-up committee will stem from the meeting. It will comprise representatives of the forces that attended Damascus' consultation meetings; namely, the nationalist, Islamic, and Kurdish groups. He indicated that this committee will follow up the convening of an expanded meeting, whose date has not been set. Moreover, the parties to be invited to such a meeting have not been identified yet. Nonetheless, our sources ruled out the possible convening of such a meeting.

Answering a question from Radio Monte Carlo, al-Hakim said: We have urged Arab and international organizations, particularly the Arab League, to step up the blockade of the Iraqi regime and revoke the blockade of the Iraqi people. Moreover, we have managed to cope with our differences over the issue of federation demanded by Kurds. Islamic groups support administrative federation, whereas Arab nationalists oppose the idea of federation in Iraq.

Al-Hakim did not say how field action can be activated in Iraq, and whether support will come from northern Iraq or southern Iraq. He pointed out that the conferees adopted some secret provisions. [end recording]

Iraq: Regime Said Amassing Troops in South To Attack Marshes

NC0404144796 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1400 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraqi opposition sources have declared that the Baghdad regime is amassing large troops in southern Iraq to launch an attack against the marshland. The same sources added that the troops are being amassed at the 4th Corps' area of operation following [words indistinct] and major battles between the Iraqi resistance forces and the regime's forces in several parts of the al-Basrah Governorate late last month.

The same Iraqi sources noted that instability prevails in the ranks of the regime's troops in the southern areas, adding that these troops lack the minimum living necessities, which is apparent in their actions.

Iraq: Regime Reportedly Launches 'Random Arrest Campaign' in South

JN0404212796 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1745 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a series of repressive measures against our people in the south, the Baghdad regime on 1 and 2 April launched a random arrest campaign against innocent citizens in the al-Basrah Governorate. Arrests were made in the districts of al-Zubayr, Abu al-Khasib, and al-Faw.

Our sources in al-Basrah say that the Tyrant's special tools stormed a number of homes in the al-Zubayr district and arrested about 30 citizens under the pretext that the detained persons had connections with Kuwaiti citizens who own farms near the Iraqi border. In the Abu al-Khasib district, the Saddamist tools arrested six citizens on the same charge. Our sources which reported the arrests did not mention the number of those arrested in al-Faw but noted that some homes in the district were stormed during the night. The fate of many detainees from al-Basarah Governorate is still unknown.

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Iraq: Clandestine Radio Reports Regime Attack on Irbil Areas

NC0404173196 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1500 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A force belonging to the 'Aflaqite regime, led by the commander of the 7th Division and supported by a number of tanks and armored vehicles, yesterday attacked the villages of Shaykh Shirwan and 'Ulaymat southwest of the city of Irbil, the capital of the Kurdistan regime.

According to the daily KURDISTAN NUWAY, which published the report, the 'Aflaqite attack inflicted heavy damage on the homes of several citizens and set their tents ablaze. The attacking group seized two civilian cars. It withdrew at noon on the same day.

The paper adds that the dictatorship troops seized six other civilian cars on the Irbil-Guwar road. They also stormed the villages of (Taba Ur), (Habirah), and (Tarash) and conducted a thorough search of citizens' homes.

In another development, and as part of the regime's Arabization policy, KURDISTAN NUWAY cites a source as saying that the regime has decided to build two residential communities in the villages of (Kafana Krah) and (Khadr Jiga) in the area of Kandinawa and another residential community in the village of (Avi Kand) in the area of (al-Taraji) to settle Arabs.

Iraq: Former Security Official Arrested; Kurdish Areas Shelled

JN0404165996 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1415 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Our well-informed sources in Irbil report that the Baghdad demented ruler's authorities recently arrested Ahmad Mulla, former chief of the regime's security in the Makhmur district. Mulla is currently running an agricultural company in the same district.

The sources say that the regime's authorities, which have always liquidated anyone who opposes the Baghdad ruler's policies even if he is very close to him, charged Ahmad Mulla with crimes related to trade and financial matters.

More on this subject in the following report from Rida al-Wandi, our correspondent in liberated Kurdsitan:

[Begin al-Wandi recording] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. The military concentrations of the sanguinary Baghdad regime violently shelled the positions of the Kurdistan opposition forces on the contact lines in Kallar, southeast of Karkuk city, over the past two days. Military sources in al-Sulaymaniyah say the Saddamist regime's artillery shelled the infantry positions of the Kallar regiment of the Kurdistan opposition forces from 0600 to 0730 on 2 April. There was no loss of life.

On 1 April, the regime's forces violently shelled [word indistinct] which began at 1400 and lasted for one hour.

Kallar city is situated south of the 36th parallel which is being protected by the international alliance against the Saddamist regime's attacks. [end recording]

Iraq: Saddam Husayn Visits Bayji District

JN0404172896 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1645 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Salah al-Din, Iraq, 4 Apr (INA)—President Saddam Husayn greeted his citizens in Bayji District, in Salah al-Din Governorate. The citizens shouted long live the president and slogans for the glory of great Iraq. They also reaffirmed their firm position and perseverance to march along the path of glory with firm steps until they achieve clear victory and defeat the advocates of the embargo and the allies of evil wherever they may be. This occurred during President Saddam Husayn's visit with his citizens in Bayji Governorate, Salah al-Din District.

At the district hall, his excellency met with the Bayji District officer who briefed him on the suffering of the sons of our people under the unjust blockade. His excellency gave instructions on how to deal with the citizens' suffering in light of the available resources. He stressed the importance of cooperation between citizens and the competent authorities to render services for them.

During his visit at the Bayji District officer's office, his excellency received many telephone calls from the sons of our people, some of whom called only to say hello, and others explained their problems and personal suffering. His excellency received them and ordered that appropriate measures be taken regarding their problems.

In the square opposite the district hall, sons of our people crowded and shouted slogans expressing adherence to the great principles and values, and determination to pursue the march of great jihad until the end under the leadership of President Saddam Husayn, hoisting the banner of pride and honor, the banner of God is Great.

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Iraq: Paper Questions Motives of Iranian Espionage Charges

JN0504093996 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0755 GMT 5 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 5 Apr (INA)—AL-THAWRAH attacks the allegations made recently by the Iranian intelligence minister and says the Tehran regime has proven by these allegations that it is unfit to be a party to any normal, honest, and equitable relationship. It has shown its incredibility and blatant opportunism, and it deliberately has resorted to cheap falsehood to justify its own plans and sick dreams.

In an article published today, the newspaper, which speaks for the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, says the Tehran regime renewed its policy of mixing the cards and political hypocrisy in its relations with Iraq. It says these allegations, which are expected from the Tehran regime's policy and methods in dealing with Iraq, coincided with the political and media campaign that aims to influence the Iraqi-UN talks on oil for basic needs. This also shows clearly that Iran has joined the band of U.S. agents who have not ceased fabricating crises, stories, and lies to harm any attempt to lift the siege or ease the suffering of the Iraqi people.

It says what bolsters this belief was that the Iranian minister admitted in his statement that those whom he claimed had spied for Iraq were arrested 12 months ago without providing an explanation why this particular time was chosen to make this announcement. This left the door open for the sole logical interpretation which shows that the Tehran regime, which lost its credibility in the world and is experiencing a false confrontation with the United States, wanted through this new lie a rapprochement with the Americans by offering services whose price is Washington's satisfaction. The Iranians know that the United States is similar to them in its lack of principles and in giving priority to its interests over right and truth.

The newspaper emphasizes that the Iranian regime should have wagered on improving its regional position and responding to the repeated Iraqi calls to normalize relations rather than following the illusions of deceptive U.S. satisfaction and adding new fissures to its relations with Iraq that will eventually lead to more problems in the Iranian situation, confirm the incredibility of the regime, and show that it is not worthy of Iraqi and Arab confidence.

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Israel: U.S. Reportedly for Strategic Agreement, Not Defense Pact

TA0504090596 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 5 Apr 96 p A4

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Israel has submitted to the United States the draft of the joint statement to be presented by Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and U.S. President Bill Clinton after their meeting in Washington at the end of April. The two leaders will announce the launching of negotiations aimed at signing a new strategic agreement, as they continue to examine the option of a defense pact. According to plans, the strategic agreement would be signed in September, close to the U.S. presidential elections.

According to Israeli sources, the Americans only had a few observations about the Israeli draft and tend to accept it, but no agreement has yet been reached on the details. Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, who was appointed by Peres to coordinate the negotiations with the United States, will meet U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher on 22 April to finalize the details of the joint statement.

The Israeli draft notes the U.S. commitment to Israel's security and to upholding and strengthening its ability "to deter and defend itself against any threat." Israel also wants to ensure the continuation of military and economic aid, the release of advanced technology to the IDF [Israel Defense Forces], and the expansion of intelligence cooperation. The Defense Ministry proposed that the strategic agreement include a secret appendix where the United States would recognize Israel's possession of an independent deterrence "in the foreseeable future." [passage omitted]

According to reports reaching Israel, the U.S. Defense Department is not keen to signing a defense pact. The Americans will agree to issue the joint statement, which is meant to help Peres before the elections, but the ensuing deliberations will be drawn-out because the administration is in no rush to commit itself to a formal pact with Israel. [passage omitted]

Israel: Baraq Criticizes Egyptian Policies in Meeting With Envoy

TA0504053696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 5 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq has met with Egypt's ambassador to Israel, Muhammad Basyuni. The two men discussed a number of issues, including reports in the Egyptian press about the nuclear reactor in Dimona. Baraq noted that Egypt's President Husni Mubarak had confirmed that there was no leakage, while newspapers in Egypt continued to carry stories on radioactive pollution in the area.

The foreign minister also expressed his dissatisfaction with Egypt's attempts to bring the issue of the nuclear proliferation agreement into the talks following-up the Sharm al-Shaykh meeting.

Baraq told Ambassador Basyuni that Israel expects Egypt to be a leader in the process of normalization between Israel and the Arab world and not to exacerbate relations with the Arab countries.

Israel: IDF Seen on Verge of 'Budget Crisis'

TA0404151596 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 3 Apr 96 pp C1, C2

[FBIS Summary] An article by Aluf Ben, "A Recovery Plan for the IDF [Israel Defense Forces]," analyzes the IDF's "budget crisis" by presenting the conflicting views of Brigadier General Mikha'el Navon, the chief of staff's financial adviser and head of the Defense Ministry's budget department, and Treasury officials. To illuminate the problem, Ben also provides fiscal data and other figures from the 1996 IDF budget.

Brig. Gen. Navon argues that "the budget does not conform with the army's size." He notes that "the balance between the order of battle (the scope of military units and their equipment), their activities, staying power, and military buildup, has been upset. There is no alternative either to reduce the size of the army or increase the budget."

Ben notes that in the 1996 budget deliberations, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and Finance Minister Avraham Shohat authorized the defense establishment to continue operating with a budget deficit of 325 million shekels without altering its work plan. Navon claims that the IDF is operating beyond its means and resources. This is possible, he explains, "because redeployment in the territories is taking place at a slower rate than planned." Navon warns that this situation cannot continue much longer; the problem will not just disappear by itself, and the defense establishment will have to pay "the price."

The Treasury already believes that the defense establishment is in the midst of a crisis and "in need of a recovery plan." In the past, the Treasury let the defense establishment manage its approved budget independently. Ben reports that "this policy has changed over the past few years. Now, at the initiative of Nir Gil'ad, assistant director of the Finance Ministry's Budget Department, the Treasury has started examining the defense

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establishment's use of the funds. The defense establishment is vehemently opposed to greater Treasury involvement." Navon rejects the contentions of defense establishment mismanagement, claiming that the budget is distributed in the "optimum way possible in view of existing constraints." Defense establishment sources say it is inconceivable that work on the development of a new weapon should require the approval of Treasury bureaucrats. Navon complains about a real erosion in the budget, which has forced the defense establishment to reallocate funds earmarked for military procurement to routine activities. Navon lists six reasons for the defense establishment's budget problems: — the erosion of the dollar exchange rate. — legislation, political pressure, and the rising cost of public services. — a real increase in expenditures on benefits, invalid rehabilitation, and bereaved families. — the rising costs of routine security activities in Lebanon and the territories. — the rising costs of the procurement, operation, and maintenance of weapon systems. — REFA'EL's [Armaments Development Authority] budget deficit, which is expected to reach 512 million shekels in 1996.

The Treasury has a different explanation: "faulty management and skewed resource allocations, which went mainly on higher salaries and improved service conditions for career army officers, at the expense of military procurements and research and development." The defense establishment says it has saved 1.1 million shekels by firing career officers and civilian employees over the past five years. The Treasury claims that all this saved money has gone on salaries. "According to the Treasury's statistics, which refer to the net budget from domestic sources (without counting U.S. aid, compensation for reserve duty, and pensions), salaries accounted for 27 percent of the defense budget, with 56 percent going on military purchases and services. In 1996, the salary clause accounted for 48 percent of the budget and procurements 39 percent."

The Treasury's major claim is that the salaries of career officers are accounting for an ever greater slice of the budget. The Treasury also showed that erroneous projections of future consumer price indexes by the defense establishment generated a deficit of hundreds of million of shekels in the defense budget. This, because in 1995, the salaries of career army officers rose far beyond the cost of living allowances paid by the Treasury. Navon dismisses these allegations, claiming that the defense establishment has no choice but to operate under conditions of "reasonable uncertainty."

Ben writes that "both explanations for the crisis lead to the same conclusion: ongoing cutbacks in the IDF's Composite 2000 multiyear work plan." Navon explains that "the internal structure of the defense budget dictates that the cutbacks will be in the IDF's multiyear buildup plans. There is no way," he says, "to cut back on benefits, rehabilitation, or a project like the Arrow missile, which is also financed by the United States." In 1995, the defense establishment cut 400 million shekels a year from its multiyear plan. This year, it was decided to pare back an additional 220 million shekels a year. Another 100 million shekel budget framework was frozen. This, in addition to a 325 million shekel budget deficit which remains unresolved.

Last year, the Defense and Finance Ministries reached a series of agreements in an attempt to ease the budget crunch. Salaries and service conditions have been reduced somewhat. The research and development budget was transferred to a closed fund and the Treasury agreed to bequeath it additional funding. The Treasury will finance the modernization of the IDF's logistical deployment in the same manner: the army will receive a loan that it will later return from the money saved in costs. "The Finance Ministry," Ben writes, "takes a very positive view of the amendment initiated by Knesset Finance Committee Chairman Gedalya Gal, which limited the defense establishment's power to divert funds from procurement to routine expenditures — thus for the first time establishing external control over the defense establishment's management of its budget." Nevertheless, this is too little, too late. "The existing budget deficit," Ben concludes, "and the continuing growth of current expenditures, will plunge the defense establishment into a crisis in the near future and put the implementation of the multiyear plan in doubt."

Israel: German Factory Said Supplying Microlight Aircraft to Hizballah

TA0504104396 Tel Aviv HATZOFE in Hebrew 5 Apr 96 pp 1, 2

[Report by Dani Shalom]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] HATZOFE has learned that a German factory is supplying the microlight aircraft used by Hizballah in Lebanon.

This factory, called Leichtflugzeug, which operates in the German city of Leopoldwag [as transliterated], sold approximately 40 Skywalker microlights to Iran a year ago. These planes, or at least some of them, were passed to Hizballah, who is preparing to use them against Israel from across the Lebanese border. [passage omitted]

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Israel: Peres' Staffers View Threat to 'Arafat's Regime, Safety

TA0504095496 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 5 Apr 96 p 2

[Report by Ben Kaspit]

[FBIS Translated Text] Officials in Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' bureau are following with concern the difficulties encountered by Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasir 'Arafat in his struggle against Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and radical elements in the territories. Yesterday evening, senior political sources said that as 'Arafat adopts harsher measures against Hamas, the chances increase that radical elements will attempt to physically harm him or remove him from power by other means.

"'Arafat has recently been making a real effort to fight terrorism," the sources said, "apparently, however, it is not so easy. 'Arafat's regime — and perhaps even he himself — are in danger."

Israel: Security Forces Extend Closure of Hebron Hamas 'Institution'

TA0504084296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0700 GMT 5 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The security forces have extended the closure order issued against a Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] institution in Hebron by another three months.

Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that the institution in question is the Hebron branch of the Association of Religious Sages in Palestine. Shaykh Taysir al-Tamimi, who heads the branch, was summoned to the Civil Administration offices and handed an injunction stating that the institution would remain closed until 1 July.

Israel: Referendum Said Result of Contacts With Moderate Settlers

TA0504095196 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 5 Apr 96 p 8

[Report by Tzvi Singer]

[FBIS Translated Text] The idea raised earlier this week by Prime Minister Shim'on Peres on holding a referendum to ratify the permanent arrangement with the Palestinians was first mentioned in the contacts he has been holding with a group of moderate settlers lead by Rabbi Yo'el Bin-Nun from 'Ofra.

The latter has recently been holding meetings with the prime minister and with Ministers Baraq, Sne, and Beilin (the go-betweens in these contacts) in a bid to reach an agreement that would enable the consolidation of a group of settlers which would support Shim'on Peres in the premiership race.

Bin-Nun and his colleagues demand that in the context of the permanent arrangement the prime minister agree to the existence of Jewish settlements under Israel's rule in the territories and to expand settlements according to approved blueprints.

The negotiations between the sides are not yet over, but the settlers involved believe there is a chance that they may end positively. "In any event, there is good will," they said.

It has been learned that the notion of a referendum was raised in these negotiations. The prime minister accepted it, and as may be recalled, he mentioned it this week on the plane on his way to Oman.

Rabbi Bin-Nun refused to comment on the issue last night. It should be pointed out that back in January this year he announced that he was considering the possibility of voicing public support for Peres' candidacy if the prime minister promised him that Israeli sovereignty would apply to the settlements in Judaea and Samaria in the context of the permanent arrangement with the Palestinians.

Rabbi Bin-Nun harshly criticized the Council of Jewish Settlements in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza for coming out in support of Binyamin Netanyahu's candidacy for the premiership, terming it an "irresponsible" move.

Israel: Peres Meets SHAS Leader; Party Said Taking 'Neutral' Stance

TA0404183196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1800 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres met yesterday with Rabbi 'Ovadya Yosef, the leader of SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim]. Both men discussed the political process. The meeting was also attended by Construction and Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer. It was reported that SHAS intends to adopt a neutral position in the elections and that it will refrain from expressing support for either Peres or Netanyahu.

Knesset Member Arye Der'i told Qol Yisra'el this evening that SHAS is familiar with the positions of Binyamin Netanyahu and Shim'on Peres with regard to the status quo on religious affairs. Therefore, SHAS has no problem in principle with joining a government led by either candidate. Nevertheless, Der'i added that if Peres again formed a blocking majority based on the Arab vote and Meretz, SHAS may prefer to be in the opposition.

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[A similar report on Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew at 1700 GMT notes that: "Rabbi 'Ovadya Yosef made a surprising statement at a meeting with Prime Minister Shim'on Peres on 3 April. The two men generally meet every year on the eve of Passover. Among other things, they discussed the measures adopted by Israel against suicide terrorists. Our correspondent Mati Kohen reports that the prime minister expressed the hope that the holiday would pass quietly, and the leader of SHAS voiced a wish of his own." In a recorded passage, 'Ovadya Yosef is heard saying: "I wish all the Israeli people that God will redeem us in His wisdom. I hope we will have a good, strong, and brave government, which will bring us full peace, God willing."

[Channel 2 Television goes on to note that: "Despite contacts between Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu's bureau and associates of Rabbi Yosef, SHAS officials said that a similar meeting with Binyamin Netanyahu did not take place."]

Israel: Poll Shows Peres Maintaining Lead Over Netanyahu

TA0504100796 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 5 Apr 96 p 8

[Public opinion poll conducted by the Dahaf Institute directed by Dr. Mina Tzemah]

[FBIS Translated Text] Question: Were elections for the premiership held today and the candidates were Shim'on Peres and Binyamin Netanyahu, who would you vote for? (Quoted in percentage points, with results of 29 March poll given in parentheses) Peres — 51 (51) Netanyahu — 45 (45) Did not reply/undecided — 4 (4)

Question: Were elections to the Knesset held today, which party would you vote for? (Results of 29 March poll given in parentheses)

	Forecast Seats	Current Knesset
Labor	43 (43)	44
Likud, Tzomet, Gesher	41-42 (43)	40
Meretz	6 (7)	12
Moledet	2-3 (-)	3
National Religious Party	5-6 (6)	6
United Torah Jewry	4 (4)	4
SHAS	4-5 (4)	6
HADASH, ADP, al-Tibi	7 (7)	5 (without al-Tibi)
The Third Way	2 (2)	—
Yisra'el Ba'aliya	4 (4)	—

[Key to abbreviations: SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim]; HADASH [Democratic Front for Peace and Equality]; ADP [Arab Democratic Party]

The poll was conducted on 3 April among 503 respondents who constitute a representative sample of Israel's adult population. The maximum margin of error is 4 percent.

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Jordan: Flights to Tel Aviv To Start 7 Apr

JN0504121696 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1100 GMT 5 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jordan's Royal Wings is to start flights between Amman and Tel Aviv on Sunday [7 April] in implementation of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty.

The Royal Wings director said the company would organize regular flights at the rate of five a week. He said a high-level delegation comprising the ministers of transport and tourism and antiquities, the president of Royal Jordanian's Board of Directors, and the Israeli ambassador in Amman would be aboard Sunday's first flight. He said Israel's El Al airline would operate five flights a week to Amman, starting 28 April.

Jordan: Iraqi Defector—Moves To 'Topple' Saddam in 'Final' Stage

JN0404125896 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 4-5 Apr 96 pp 1, 7

[Report by a JORDAN TIMES staff reporter]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—General Nizar al-Khazraji, a former chief of staff of the Iraqi army, on Wednesday [3 April] announced that he was joining the Iraqi National Accord movement, an exile group opposed to the regime of Saddam Husayn, and asserted that moves to topple the Baghdad government were "in the final and decisive stage."

The general also promised to work for building a "new Iraq which will enjoy stability, security, democracy, equality and justice for all."

Breaking a self-assumed silence more than 10 days after he arrived here following his defection from Iraq, Gen. al-Khazraji, a Shiite from southern Iraq, accused the Saddam regime of destroying "the sovereignty and integrity of Iraq, its people and its armed forces."

Saddam Husayn "has also debased the morale, prestige and dignity which the armed forces had built through great sacrifice, struggle and performance during the harshest condition faced by the Iraqi people," said the general in a one-page statement.

The statement, sent to the JORDAN TIMES, bore the letterhead of the Iraqi National Accord, which announced last week it had set up an office in Amman.

"The suffering and the great catastrophe of our Iraqi people caused by Saddam Husayn, his son 'Udayy and Qusayy and the few thugs supporting him is known to every one," said the statement. "The desolation of Iraq was created by Saddam's belligerent and ill-conceived policies which have and will destroy Iraq and the region."

Gen. al-Khazraji, described by Iraqi exiles as a credible and honest military officer and who has been allowed to stay in Jordan, said he was "a fighting soldier in our noble armed forces and a son of the great people of Iraq," and that he stood against "all those who seek to destroy Iraq."

"By the grace of God and my deep and total belief in the defeat of tyranny and aggression and that Iraq will surely be victorious, I am determined to work alongside my brothers who carry the banner of the Iraqi National Accord movement and their courageous military brothers inside and outside Iraq and proceed to the final and decisive state of liberation and salvation of our country, its people and armed forces from the catastrophe imposed on them these many years," the general's statement said.

"We will build a new Iraq which enjoy stability, security, democracy, equality and justice for all, without the ugliness of racial, sectarian or religious discrimination, an Iraq enjoying sovereignty, brotherhood, fundamental national unity, an Iraq that rejects hatred and aggression, an Iraq that has warm and balanced relations with all, an Iraq that interacts with an open heart and mind with all nations respectfully and peacefully to bring our people to progress, enlightenment and prosperity," it said.

According to sources, Gen. al-Kazraji did not address the media after his defection through northern Iraq and arrival in Jordan before Wednesday because he was involved in "intense contacts" with other Iraqi groups and did not want to state a public position until he was sure of broad support.

The sources declined to reveal the outcome of the general's contacts.

"With God's help and your support, we, the brothers of the Iraqi National Accord movement and the courageous soldiers who serve the honourable national role in the armed forces, are in the final and decisive stages of this lofty and noble goal.

"With open heart and mind we welcome the cooperation of all sincere parties that seek the salvation of our people and strive to build a new, prosperous Iraq with the help of God, our people and armed forces inspired by our glorious history, the sacrifices of our people and the heroism of our armed forces."

The statement concluded with: "God is our witness. Victory is only from God. God is Great."

The Iraqi National Accord movement, which is based in northern Iraq outside the control of the Baghdad

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government, says its members are mostly military officers as well as medium-level bureaucrats inside and outside Iraq.

A recent report in London's Independent newspaper, quoting a member of the group in northern Iraq, said the movement was behind bombings in Iraq over the past two or three years and the attacks were financed by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Washington has not commented on the report.

Information Minister Marwan al-Mu'ashshir, reiterating Jordan's rejection of allowing itself to be used as a base for military operations against Iraq, said Monday that as far as the Kingdom was concerned the group's office here would only involve in "political and informational" activities.

"We have not been and will not be a party to any military operations against Iraq," said Dr. al-Mu'ashshir.

Jordan: Al-Kabariti Says Economy 'Stable'

JN0404192496 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 4-5 Apr 96 pp 1, 7

[Report by P.V. Vivekanand]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti on Wednesday [3 April] rejected criticism against the government's monetary policies and said the Kingdom's economy was strong and would soon witness further improvements as a result of government moves that would include a gradual lowering of interest rates.

"We are in a very stable situation," as shown by all economic indications, whether in terms of foreign exchange reserves, the exchange rate of the dinar, exports, and overall economic performance, he said.

But Jordan is in a "transitional period of perhaps two years and this period is going to be critical" as is the case in any country moving to free market economy, said Mr. al-Kabariti during an unprecedented visit to the Amman Financial Market (AFM) by a prime minister.

Mr. al-Kabariti, whose comments at a meeting with AFM officials, stockbrokers, and investors were carried by Jordan Television, reaffirmed his government's support for the stock exchange, which he described as an institution that contributes to enhancing the national economy and attracting investments.

"The government's national economic programme cannot succeed without this institution which encourages investments," he said, promising that the government would "study the entire situation and do whatever it can" to help the market resolve its problems.

The prime minister's visit to the AFM and his comments there were apparently aimed at dispelling negative comments raised against the government's monetary policies, which some analysts assert have led to uncertainties in the market as a result of high interest rates.

The contentions came against the backdrop of a sharp decline in share prices at the AFM resulting mainly, according to stockbrokers, from a crunch on liquidity.

During a tour of the market floor, many investors and brokers were seen on Jordan Television complaining to Mr. al-Kabariti that high interest rates had harmed business, particularly small-scale investors.

In his meeting with AFM director General Umayyah Tuqan and representatives of brokers and investors in the market, Mr. al-Kabariti took issue with a recent negative assessment by an international consultancy firm of the Jordanian bourse.

"International standards and figures will prove those who cast doubts on the performance of the Jordanian economy wrong," said Mr. al-Kabariti. He noted that the same firm had issued a positive assessment of the market in October 1995.

According to sources close to the prime minister, the government was surprised by the assessment by Merill Lynch, advising investors to be "cautious" on Jordanian equities as long as interest rates remained high in the Kingdom.

"The same firm had a positive assessment of the Jordanian stock market and economy only four months ago," said one source, echoing the prime minister. "Stock market prices go up and down resulting from a variety of reasons, and the performance of a short period should not be taken as a key indicator of the status of the market."

Mr. al-Kabariti, a U.S.-educated economist himself, said Wednesday:

"Yes, I agree that there is a crisis (in the stock market), but this has no bearing on the overall economic status and performance of Jordan."

He noted that foreign reserves at the Central Bank of Jordan had increased, exports went up by nearly 15 percent in 1995 and the dinar remains very stable against all currencies, and affirmed that Jordan was now fully confident of the stability of its economy and currency.

"I can assure you that we have reached a stage of confidence and monetary stability and that there is no need for any further measures" in this respect, said the prime minister, adding that "all justifications for a

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continuation of high interest rates will be eliminated starting from the beginning of June."

The prime minister said that by the beginning of summer, the government will start using the available financial and monetary tools to reduce interest rates gradually in line with its commitment to follow market economy policies.

Jordan's economy would witness strong improvements in two years, he said, calling for cooperation from all concerned parties to enable the Kingdom to face the challenges of "crossing this short, transitional bridge."

Part of the prime minister's comments were also devoted to reassuring the stock market that the government was committed to supporting it.

He noted that the government, which is pursuing a privatisation programme, could not transfer state ownership of companies to the private sector without going through the stock market, "which we believe is the fair way of transferring...ownership from the government to the people."

"Free market economy and privatisation programmes cannot succeed without the existence and involvement of the AFM," he said, adding that the bourse had a proven record of offering key services in this regard.

Imbalances in the market, said the prime minister, could not be solely attributed to the government's monetary policies. "There are more than one reason for these imbalances," as reflected in the sudden rises and declines in the market, he said and blamed investment companies and major commercial banks "because these institutions role is not being implemented in a comfortable manner."

At the same time, Mr. al-Kabariti called for a review of past decisions and legislations that were designed on the belief that they would help the government achieve its objectives.

The prime minister noted that high interest rates would not only affect the AFM, but also have negative repercussions on investments. He called for objectivity and alertness in the decision-making process, and said raising interest rates with the objective of increasing savings at the expense of investments carries risks and should not continue.

Mr. al-Kabariti also reviewed Jordanian-Palestinian economic relations and said Jordan was seeking to turn them "unique and distinguished."

"There are situations that we cannot overcome" in terms of accelerating trade with the Palestinians, he said. "We are pressing Israel to remove all obstacles impeding free trade exchange between Jordan and Palestine. I think that the response is favourable...and we have to deal with the agreements between us in order to have an open free trade in the region," he said.

He pointed out that trade protocols signed with other countries have proved futile in terms of improving trade.

"The age of protocols has ended," he said. "For example, the Jordanian protocol with Iraq is something and the very philosophy of protocols is something else. Industries benefit from the siege imposed on Iraq; we will not invest in the suffering of the Iraqis and the siege imposed on them."

He said the government wants the industrialists to improve quality and standards to be able to compete in international markets, "not only in besieged countries."

The prime minister said he was optimistic that Arab investments in Jordan would double in two years.

In comments to Jordan Television after the meeting, Dr. Tuqan, the AFM director-general, described Mr. al-Kabariti's visit to the market as very significant in terms of assuring the market of government support as well as the overall performance and status of the economy.

Dr. Tuqan said he was confident that the economy would see significant improvement soon and reiterated that Jordan was in a period of transition.

"What we need now in this period is cooperation and understanding of everyone concerned, businessmen, industrialists and investors," he said.

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Lebanon: Al-Hariri on Chirac's Visit, Peace Process

BR0404135496 Paris LIBERATION in French 4 Apr 96 p 10

[Interview with Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri by Pierre Haski in Beirut; date not given: "There Is No Syrian Occupation"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Haski] What are you expecting from Jacques Chirac's visit to Lebanon today?

[Al-Hariri] The visit is historic. It is the first time a French president has traveled to Lebanon. It is not just a symbol: When the French head of state visits us, sees that security is guaranteed, and that the future of the country is certain, he gives an answer to those who doubt this. On the economic level I am also expecting the continuation of the commitments made during my visit to Paris last year.

[Haski] On the diplomatic level, will this strengthen Lebanon's independence?

[Al-Hariri] This is wonderful. France has always stated that it supported Lebanon's independence and sovereignty, but the visit is much more important than any statement.

[Haski] Critics of the visit, on the contrary, see it as approval for the Syrian occupation....

[Al-Hariri] There is no Syrian occupation. There are Syrians who are here at our request.

[Haski] Certain people believe that this visit is a mistake as long as there are foreign troops in Lebanon.

[Al-Hariri] What does this mean? That France should drop us? (laughter) The opponents who say this do not represent much.

[Haski] Is it not approval of your own person?

[Al-Hariri] No. Obviously there are ties of friendship between President Chirac and myself, but if Lebanon were not interesting for France, he would not come. Lebanon is an important country for French policy in the Middle East.

[Haski] France is playing a secondary role in the peace process. Does this visit mark a return?

[Al-Hariri] The Madrid conference (in 1991 — LIBERATION editor's note) gave the Americans and the Russians the task of organizing everything. We are interested in France and Europe playing a much larger role. This is our desire, but it is also that of the other Arab countries, in particular the Syrians.

[Haski] Lebanon has tied its role in the peace process to that of Syria....

[Al-Hariri] It is not quite like that. We have an agreement: Neither the Syrians nor the Lebanese will sign a separate peace. We do not want to give the Israelis the opportunity to play on any differences between us. The present negotiations are taking place between the Syrians and the Israelis because the problems between the two of them are more complicated. For Israel Syria presents a strategic danger, whereas Lebanon represents just an uncomfortable situation. It is not the same. I can assure you that we will sign together. It is in our interest. If the Syrians were to sign before us, what would our situation be toward Israel? Not easy, is it?

[Haski] The Israelis are saying that they are disappointed at Syria's attitude in the recent negotiations. Do you believe that Damascus is ready for peace?

[Al-Hariri] Everything depends on Israel. The Syrians have been saying sensible things: If you want peace, then you have to withdraw from the Golan Heights. Israel is saying: "Yes, but." The Syrians cannot accept this. Even if negotiations have moved on a lot during the past two years, Israel is not yet ready. But the Syrians are ready, and so are we.

[Haski] Are the terms of the Israeli-Lebanese peace already apparent?

[Al-Hariri] We can move forward easily if the Israelis are telling the truth when they affirm that they are interested neither in our territory nor in our water reserves. In that case, what is left: withdrawal and security. That is not too difficult.

[Haski] Is the Lebanese Government able to get its part of such an agreement respected by Hizballah?

[Al-Hariri] Yes. Hizballah represents the resistance to the occupation. If there is no more occupation, there is no longer any need for resistance, and neither Hizballah nor anyone else will be able to keep their weapons. The Lebanese state alone will be responsible for security. But as long as there is occupation, we cannot ask the force which is resisting to surrender its weapons, even if we are not in agreement with its political agenda.

[Haski] Who is going to disarm Hizballah? You, or the Syrians?

[Al-Hariri] Hizballah will have to hand over its weapons itself, but in any event the Lebanese Army will have an important role to play, as will the Syrians.

[Haski] This means that the 50,000 Syrian soldiers will stay on afterward?

[Al-Hariri] Afterward we shall have a totally different situation. It is difficult to judge the situation now, when we have enormous security needs. There are priorities.

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First and foremost Israel must withdraw. Hizballah will be disarmed, and we are expecting international aid to strengthen our army. If all this happens, we will examine the situation in the new context.

[Haski] For you there is no automatic link between the Israeli and the Syrian withdrawals?

[Al-Hariri] No, not at all. There are a lot of conditions. We do not even know whether we will have the help which has been promised to our army, in particular by France.

[Haski] France is proposing to take part in a multinational force in southern Lebanon and on the Golan Heights in the event of an agreement. Are you in favor?

[Al-Hariri] Certainly. From our side, there is no problem with France and I believe that the same goes for the French toward us. The French are at home here. And we are at home in France. (laughter)

Lebanon: Chirac Addresses Lebanese Parliament on Ties

NC0404175196 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1550 GMT 4 Apr 96

[Report on French President Jacques Chirac's address before the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies on 4 April—read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] French President Jacques Chirac delivered a comprehensive speech in which he dealt with French-Lebanese relations and France's role in supporting Lebanon on the international level to implement UN Security Council Resolution 424. He also dealt with the Middle East peace process.

President Chirac noted that he had chosen Lebanon to be on the first leg of his official visit to the Middle East to demonstrate France's interest in and friendship for Lebanon. He said: General De Gaulle, leader of Free France, chose the appropriate words in 1941 to express the strength of the everlasting ties between France and Lebanon. De Gaulle said the name of Lebanon imbues in the heart of each French man and woman very special sentiments. The free and dignified Lebanese people have always been the only people in the world who have continued to feel an affinity for France.

President Chirac emphasized that the strong and deep-rooted ties between Lebanon and France have opened up Lebanon to the Western world. He noted that Lebanon's unique character is that it is a crossroads for civilizations and a meeting place for religions. He affirmed France's support for Lebanon's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity within firm and inviolable borders.

President Chirac asked: How can we forget the solidarity that Gen. De Gaulle expressed with Lebanon following the [Israeli] attack on its civilian airport [in 1968]? My country has undertaken continuous efforts to demand that the UN member states respect all the UN Security Council resolutions, above all resolution 425, which will enable Lebanon to recover its territory.

President Chirac added: I officially confirm to you this evening that France will not cease struggling for a just and comprehensive peace in the region, a peace that will restore to your country full sovereignty over all its territory. I reiterate that France wants Lebanon to be free, sovereign, and independent.

President Chirac said Lebanon is a model country in which citizens from all religions and communities coexist and participate in government. He said this diversity and coexistence are based on constant dialogue and mutual respect. He praised the consolidation of security and civil peace in Lebanon. He said the march of economic development has started again.

He affirmed that in the near future the peace negotiations must lead to an end of the foreign occupation and clashes in southern Lebanon.

President Chirac affirmed that Lebanon will not be alone as long as the Lebanese people are able to safeguard their unity, are loyal to their ideals, and have faith in their future. He said: France will continue to support the reconstruction efforts in Lebanon. He said: Since I took office my wish has been to strengthen France's commitment to you. I expressed this wish to President al-Hirawi when he visited Paris a year ago. I also expressed this wish to Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri during his recent official visit. I proposed to him that we increase our economic and financial aid and improve the conditions for giving loans to Lebanon.

President Chirac affirmed that France will contribute to the economic development in Lebanon and will help Beirut become the region's economic and financial hub, particularly in a Middle East enveloped by peace. He affirmed that Lebanon can count on France's support in the EU. He noted that the EU has contributed to development projects. These efforts will be intensified within the framework of the European-Mediterranean partnership approved at the Barcelona conference in which Lebanon participated.

President Chirac said that France will defend Lebanon's cause at the EU in such a way that an association agreement will be signed early.

President Chirac affirmed that France believes that peace is inevitable. France hopes that 1996 will be a decisive year in which peace agreements will be signed

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between Syria and Israel and between Lebanon and Israel. He affirmed that under a just and lasting peace Lebanon will restore its sovereignty on all its territory in accordance with the UN resolutions.

President Chirac urged all the Lebanese to have faith in the greatness of their country and its message which will make Lebanon a focal point for development in the Middle East. He said you should mobilize your potential and national spirit for the service of Lebanon's independence and prosperity and you should unite your efforts to contribute to this collective activity. You should revitalize your country. You should place the public interest above the private interest. The state's prestige and credibility depend on this. In moments of doubt and suspicion, you should remember that no country has survived without making sacrifices.

Lebanon: More on French President Chirac's Address to Parliament

LD0404180396 Paris France-Inter Radio Network in French 1700 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Beirut put make-up on to welcome French President Jacques Chirac. [passage omitted]

Alain Menart reports from Beirut:

[Menart] [passage omitted] After talks with the president, Jacques Chirac addressed parliament. His was not a diplomatic speech; he repeated many times the words sovereignty and independence and explained how these could be achieved:

[Begin Chirac recording] The future will depend very much on what the Lebanese themselves do. It is mainly up to them to get something positive out of peace. This is why all the citizens have the duty to take part in the choice of their representatives and to get personally involved in the state machinery. As for those in power, they must create the necessary conditions and guarantees so that this free choice can be made and so that all the political groupings in the country be as represented as possible.

Put public interest, the interests of your country, above private interests [interets particuliers]. The authority of the state, the credibility of government, and the role of the institutions are at stake. When you are assailed by doubts, remember that there can be no state without sacrifices. [end recording]

[Menart] Every hint at the Israeli presence was followed by long applause, but his sentence on the need for the Lebanese Army to enforce law and order alone in the country and for the Syrian troops to withdraw after peace is restored was met by gelid silence. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: French President Chirac Tells Parliament of French Commitment to Lebanon

LD0404175296 Paris France-Info Radio in French 1600 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Jacques Chirac arrived in Lebanon early this afternoon on a 48-hour visit. [passage omitted]

Addressing the Lebanese Parliament, President Chirac said he wished for a free, independent, and sovereign Lebanon.

[Begin Chirac recording] As in the past, France is deeply committed to your independence, your sovereignty, and to respect for your territorial integrity in inviolate borders. I would like you to know how much our common history is a matter of pride for France. Its sons and its soldiers have given their lives for justice and peace to prevail. Yes, France is faithful to its historical commitment to the independence and sovereignty of Lebanon. [end recording]

That was Jacques Chirac, who also pointed up the importance of UN Resolution 425, which calls for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from southern Lebanon.

Lebanon: Al-Hirawi Speaks at Banquet To Honor Chirac

NC0404203396 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1830 GMT 4 Apr 96

[Speech by Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi at a banquet in honor of visiting French President Jacques Chirac at the Presidential Palace in B'abda—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] Your Excellency the President: You begin your Middle East tour with a visit to Lebanon. Perhaps once again you wish to underline Lebanon's role as a bridge between East and West. Welcome to the land of Lebanon, a homeland whose people boast that in addition to their mother language they speak French. A homeland that appreciates your culture and traditions and shares with you the values of right, justice, freedom, and democracy, in which you believe.

In a country that has been your friend for a long time, we welcome Your Excellency at a delicate stage in our history, during which we are rising to defend our right, role, and status in this part of the world. Our fate, geography, and history have all contributed to always placing our country at the heart of civilization movements, from Europe, to Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Lebanon,

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which is the meeting place for all these civilizations and which rejuvenates them in its surroundings, has been enriched by these movements when they were proper in the cultural, artistic, economic, and humanitarian domains but turned it into a victim when they invaded us militarily.

We are certain that behind the events that rocked Lebanon for 17 years stood several regional and international problems, which found in our geographic location, our diverse political and cultural makeup, and our free economic system room to reflect their destructive effects. With full pride we declare that not a single country, people, or homeland in the world could have stood fast like we did and or risen like we did. For this reason, we cling fast to our free system. Today and after all the hardships, Lebanon is proceeding toward rebuilding its unity, state, institutions, and democracy, reestablishing its national sovereignty, and reviving its economy. This thrust is vital for our national, regional, and international contribution. We have succeeded in bringing Lebanon back to normalcy. It remains for us to succeed in building the Lebanon of the future.

Security has been established after we embarked on stopping the fighting on our land and disbanding the militias. As a result, the barriers between areas and Lebanese families have collapsed, making room for reviving the free national dialogue. We have initiated the rebuilding of the state's executive, legislative, and judicial institutions, security forces, and administration, particularly in the socioeconomic domain. We also have strived to establish its presence at international forums.

However, Mr. President, the predicament of the past will not pass for good unless the south and Western al-Biqa' are totally freed of the Israeli occupation. Unless the dear parts of our land there are freed, the wounds will remain open and our sovereignty and independence will not be complete. If Israel does not fully withdraw from our territory to the internationally recognized borders, making room for the Lebanese state to exercise its effective sovereignty by its own troops, the chapter of victims and bloodshed will not be turned. Let Israel withdraw, and we will be responsible for our security on our land and the security of our land. The UN resolutions must be implemented, especially Resolution 425. The principles of the Madrid peace conference must be respected so that international words on the need to save Lebanon may match the deeds. We are building a regional peace that restores to Lebanon and Syria their rights. Lebanon and Syria have chosen the path of cooperation and coordination to uphold a just and comprehensive peace and defend each country's right to its security, independence, and sovereignty. This is what it means to say that the Lebanese and Syrian tracks run in parallel. Events have proven that there can be no peace in the region without Lebanon and Syria or at their expense.

We have entered the peace process with full courage, confidence, and an overwhelming and firm national decision to reach a just and comprehensive peace. This is because Israel's continued violation of the international resolutions and the credibility of international legality will nourish the continued violence in our region and endanger the world's security.

More than 13 rounds of negotiations between Lebanon and Israel were held in Washington without any progress, because of Israel's persistent maneuvers and pursuit of dangerous proposals. Does Israel want to finish off our capabilities with these maneuvers in exchange for nothing? They are asking us to prevent resistance against the occupation, but what will guarantee that our rights will be restored? Is this a just and comprehensive peace? They call on us to end the economic boycott, but in the meantime we are the subject of ferocious air raids and our sons are dying in Israeli prisons without any consideration for human rights.

Mr. President: France, which takes pride in the resistance that has led to its liberation, does not accept the deliberate attempt by some parties to confuse the legitimate resistance against a regular army that occupies our national land and carries out aggressions against our people and terrorism. Lebanon is against violence and terrorism. Lebanon has been the victim of violence and terrorism. However, Lebanon cannot give in to occupation of its land and violation of the homeland's dignity. It is unacceptable for the world community to remain unable to exercise its powers to implement its resolutions and to compel Israel to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

Your Excellency the President: Lebanon is more than just a transitory homeland in the course of history, and this is why it has managed to outlive every storm that pessimists thought would finish it off. The contributions of its people over the ages in the fields of art, literature, poetry, science, economics, finance, medicine, law, innovation, and others have left their mark on all continents, emphasizing Lebanon's role as a country that always goes beyond its geographical boundaries. France, which repeatedly and with pleasure and generosity opened its doors to the Lebanese, including some who are with us here tonight, deeply realizes the importance of the Lebanese contributions to its culture, heritage, and interests worldwide.

Through its struggle for life and defense of its identity, independence, sovereignty, Arab causes, and every just

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and right cause. Lebanon has found in the great school of De Gaulle a firm and solid support. By hailing the president of France, a faithful disciple of this great school, we are hailing French and European solidarity, which by tradition knows the meaning of this support as well as it knows this region and Lebanon's right to (?sovereignty). Lebanon will not forget that the first force to take part in peace-keeping operations in Lebanon was the French contingent, which you intend to visit Mr. President. The blood of this contingent will mix with the blood of our martyrs and victims for as long as Lebanon shall live. Lebanon is confident of your solidarity with it, for you have always carried the banners of defending the just and right causes in the world.

Your Excellency the President: You are here with us on the eve of Good Friday. As a great friend of Lebanon, perhaps you will join us in Lebanon's resurrection after the long troubles we have been through. To you, Mr. President, and to France I raise the toast of Lebanese-French friendship.

Lebanon: Workers Prevented From Leaving Building To Stage Sit-In

NC0404133996 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1305 GMT 4 Apr 96

[Report from the headquarters of the Lebanese Workers Federation by an unidentified correspondent in Beirut—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] The lieutenant colonel in charge of the security force deployed around the General Workers Union building has issued a memorandum banning workers from leaving the building to stage the scheduled sit-in in front of the Chamber of Deputies. The people taking part in the planned sit-in have now returned to the union building.

Deputy Zahir al-Khatib said he will take a stand in light of developments. He stressed the need for action.

Deputy Habib Sadiq said the confrontation is not with the security forces, but with the course the government is pursuing.

Karim Paqraduni, deputy leader of the Phalangist Party, stressed the need to respond to the ban by maintaining the popular move toward the government to achieve social demands and freedoms. He said a crisis still exists, even if the sit-in is not staged.

Dear listeners: We are awaiting the statement Ilyas Abu-Rizq, chairman of the General Workers Union, is preparing. He will explain in it how the sit-in was prevented.

Lebanon: Workers Union Head—Government Reveals Autocratic Mentality

NC0404211696 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1615 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Leading figures in the General Workers Union, deputies, and other political figures who assembled in the Union's headquarters, were today prevented from heading to the Chamber of Deputies to stage a sit-in.

The Union's Chairman Ilyas Abu-Rizq said: If we wanted to express the pain we feel, the government wanted to reveal the approach it is pursuing and the oppressive decisions it is making.

He added: Once again the government demonstrated its autocratic mentality that respects no laws or even the Constitution. The orders it gave today to the security authorities turned the headquarters of the workers union into a detention camp for deputies, party leaders and members, members of the workers union, and journalists. This shows the government's approach on all the issues that concern the country, particularly the workers and their demands and living conditions.

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Syria: Syrian Source Hails 'Very Important' French Role in Middle East

MM0404133496 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 4 Apr 96 p 5

[Report by Salwa al-Istiwani in Damascus: "Syria Is Talking About New Relations With France in 'Young Gaullists' Era"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Commenting on French President Jacques Chirac's visit to Lebanon which starts today, an authoritative Syrian source told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that there is "considerable affinity and understanding" in Syria's and France's views on many issues, adding that Syria expects France to play a bigger and more effective role in the peace process and welcomes such a role.

The official was keen to stress that there is a "great deal of trust" in the current relations between Presidents Hafiz al-Asad and Jacques Chirac, and stressed that Syria has turned a new page in its relations with France after the "young Gaullists" came to power. With regard to welcoming an effective French role in the Middle East, the Syrian official said that this role is still very important in view of France's, Syria's, and Lebanon's mutual interests, particularly in the economic field, and with regard to ensuring political stability by safeguarding and achieving peace in the region. The Syrian official added that the European role was clearly apparent at the Sharm al-Shaykh meeting where it focused on achieving peace, and also emerged at the Sharm al-Shaykh follow-up committees' meetings.

A few days ago, President Hafiz al-Asad stressed to the French president's envoy the importance of an effective and dynamic French role in the peace process and indicated Syria's readiness to cooperate with France and Europe in any endeavor that would help advance the peace process. Damascus supports France's participation in the security arrangements in south Lebanon after the eventual Israeli withdrawal within the framework of the peace process. Syria believes that French President Jacques Chirac's visit to Lebanon is the basis for a new start in French relations which would include Lebanon and the region. French President Jacques Chirac is considered a close friend of the Arabs and Syria in particular, and, since assuming the French presidency has tried to consolidate his country's relations with Syria and Lebanon. According to people close to him, Chirac believes that Damascus is the key to Paris' relations with the other Arab capitals. Syria has always tried to support President Chirac, particularly during the French elections, when President al-Asad helped free two French hostages held in Lebanon, which, at the time, boosted Chirac's elections prospects. [passage omitted]

Syria: Benazir Bhutto's Visit Discussed With Pakistani Minister

JN0404143696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1115 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Salim Yasin, deputy prime minister for economic affairs, received at 1030 today Shahid Hassan Khan, minister of state and special adviser to the Pakistani prime minister. Dr. 'Abd-al-Rahim Subay'i, minister of state for planning affairs, also attended the meeting.

They discussed bilateral ties in all fields, particularly in the trade, economic, media, and cultural fields. They also discussed means for promoting relations in the investment field, and for avoiding double taxation. They also reviewed preparations for Pakistani Prime Minister's Benazir Bhutto's visit to Syria this month, and the agreements which will be concluded during this visit.

Syria: Paper Assails Israeli Stand, Urges Cosponsors Intervention

JN0504071696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 5 Apr 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline of "Peace of Justice, Not Capitulation," AL-THAWRAH says: At the joint news conference held at the end of the Syrian-Egyptian summit in Damascus, President Hafiz al-Asad was very clear when he emphasized the principled Syrian position and when he explained the reasons and obstacles that have obstructed and continue to obstruct the aspired progress in the peace process.

Israel has always been the obstructor, and has always been the party that blocks, delays, and suspends the talks. This is not a charge but a fact that should be revealed and an evaluation that clarifies things, focuses on the fault, and places the U.S. sponsor face to face with its responsibilities, pledges, guarantees, and commitments to peace.

As leader al-Asad said, the gateway to peace has started to narrow although it has not reached the point of closure. Five years have passed, yet we have not reached peace nor a partial peace. The reason, as AL-THAWRAH says, is that Israel does not commit itself to the UN resolutions and does not abide by the logic that all people have their own land, borders, sovereignty, and dignity. The Israelis have not made their firm decision

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about the peace process yet. Without a new position, we do not think that peace will be realized in the region.

AL-THAWRAH concludes: Peace without conditions and the terms of reference of the Madrid conference is a capitulation that is unacceptable to Syria. Any solution that does not take into consideration justice, comprehensiveness, balance [tawazun], equitability [takafu'], and equality [musawah], and that does not secure the restoration of the Arab rights in the Golan and southern Lebanon, and Israel's withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 lines is a flawed and dead solution that cannot survive, and a landmine for peace.

In another commentary, the newspaper says the Syrian position on peace has been principled, defined, and clear since Syria first announced this position. This position emphasized real peace that is based on the resolutions of international legitimacy and the U.S. initiative which call for full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and returning legitimate rights to those entitled to them.

AL-THAWRAH says: This position preserved its principles and firmness and won the world's confidence and appreciation because it is clearly committed to the bases of Madrid peace process. This was due to the fact that Syria chose to act for peace in the open and avoided secret channels and secret diplomacy. Therefore, its position remained firm and did not falter because he who acts in the open will be clear and will not falter.

The newspaper says: In contrast to this Syrian position which is clearly committed to the principles of the peace process, the Israeli position was exposed to all in the world as a maneuvering position that rejects these principles. AL-THAWRAH says: Had Israel been willing to have peace as it alleges, and had it wanted to end the cycle of violence, it would have declared its open commitment to the principles of the peace process represented in full withdrawal and ending all signs of occupation and injustice in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy and the U.S. initiative. But, it has not done so, and there are no signs that it intends to do so in the foreseeable future.

Concluding its commentary, AL-THAWRAH emphasizes: The solution is clear, and it is through commitment to all of the principles of peace. This was what Syria has declared and emphasized since the very beginning. However, the Israeli position has continued to be far from commitment to these principles. This makes Israel the only party responsible for obstructing the peace process. Failure to quickly return to the peace principles—and this is the responsibility of the U.S. and Russian sponsors—and failure to force Israel to abide by these principles, will make peace unattainable.

Syria: Column Rebuts Israeli TV Report on Syrian Economy

JN0504072196 Damascus AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 27 Feb 96 p 8

["People's Talk" column by Bassam Ja'arah: "Syrian Economy"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Yesterday, I read a report on the Syrian economy which was transmitted on Channel 3 of Israeli Television. Of course, it was not strange that this report contained so many fallacies to discredit Syria and its independent national and pan-Arab decisions, which have become a source of pride for every Arab citizen throughout the Arab homeland.

We will not go into the details of this report, but simply refer to what it says about cotton growing in Syria. The report says that even the cultivation of cotton in Syria is not irrigated. The report then goes on to cite further information similar to the one about the cultivation of cotton in Syria, which clearly indicated what the report was aiming at.

Had the Israeli economic expert realized that one tonne of cotton from rainfall areas is worth more than one tonne from irrigated areas, he would not have spoken about the Syrian cotton crop in such a way.

Of course, cotton is an important strategic crop for Syria. It is an irrigated crop, and our produce from it is in great demand in all world markets due to its good quality. Moreover, Syria is third in the world in terms of productivity per area unit. We would also like to add that Syria has the ability to determine what it wants to produce from this crop and other basic crops, and add further that irrigated areas in Syria guarantee the country's grain needs and that these irrigated areas are increasing with the implementation of new irrigation projects.

We do not wish to say more than that about the strength and solidness of the Syrian economy, but only wish to reassure all those who wish Syria well — and the Israeli expert is not one of them of course — that Syria is alright and that it has the means to guarantee its food requirements by depending on itself. We would also like to add that he who can secure his bread has the ability to act and make his own national and pan-Arab decisions.

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: UN Official—Taleban's Contrasting Statements Due to Split

BK0404134096 Hong Kong AFP in English 1326 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, April 4 (AFP) — The Taleban militia's latest vehement refusal to negotiate with Kabul was the result of a split between the faction's political and religious leadership, a top UN official said Thursday [4 April].

Dr Elsadig Abunafeesa, senior political advisor to UN peace envoy Mahmoud Mestiri, also said the refusal issued at a meeting of Taleban clerics did not shatter hopes for direct talks between the warring factions.

"We are not surprised by what the meeting in Kandahar decided on Wednesday," he said just 24 hours after Mestiri told President Borhanoddin Rabbani that the Taleban were ready for talks "tomorrow."

"This was a meeting of religious figures from a religious movement where religious people have the upper hand," he said. "But it remains to be seen to what extent that will be binding on the politicians," he added.

Mestiri had told Rabbani and journalists that the Islamic movement's second-in-command Mohammed Rabbani (eds: no relation) was prepared to sit down with the Kabul administration for talks on ending the fighting around the besieged capital.

"They say they are ready to talk tomorrow, and these words are in the mouth of the Taleban for the very first time," the ambassador told reporters.

But within hours, the gathering of ulemas, or Muslim clerics, called for a holy war on the "un-Islamic" government and flatly rejected any possibility of negotiating with it.

Abunafeesa, who remained here after Mestiri and the rest of his team left Kabul Wednesday after a six-hour visit, stressed however that the UN special mission was still optimistic that the first direct talks between two factions could take place.

"We still consider them to be committed to what they told us although they have publically refused talks," he said.

"As far as I know they said nothing about a continuation [word indistinct] war against Rabbani, which they were expected to. I therefore feel that there is still hope and that the doors have not all been closed," he said.

He added that Mestiri, a former Tunisian foreign minister who has been battling to broker a compromise between the warring parties here for two years, may still travel to Kandahar to hear the views of the Taleban political leadership on talks with Kabul.

"He will carry on until the political leaders say they do not want negotiations with the government through the UN, at which point he may reassess," he said.

Earlier the Afghan Government dismissed the Taleban militia's declaration of a holy war on Kabul as "ridiculous" and said the conflicting statements were a clear sign of an internal rift in the Islamic movement.

"The two vastly contrasting signals show that the divisions between the two opposing strands within the Taleban leadership are now coming to the fore," a Foreign Ministry source told AFP.

"The more conciliatory camp is saying the movement should talk to the government about ending the fighting, while the other seems to be bent on mindlessly going to war at whatever cost," he said.

"In any case, a Taleban jihad on the government or its senior officials is ridiculous. It is nothing new and is quite meaningless as it is obvious that they are unable to seize Kabul from us," he added.

The official also said that indirect talks between the Taleban and Kabul were still continuing through the intermediary of a powerful neutral political group based in the eastern city of Jalalabad.

The Taleban have been encamped on three major fronts around Kabul for six months, vowing to topple the government and to impose Islamic law across the whole country.

Afghanistan has been torn apart by a bloody conflict since 1992, when the mojahedin groups who had forced out Afghanistan's Soviet occupiers began battling each other for power.

Afghanistan: 6 Injured in Taleban Rocket Attack on Kabul

LD0404183996 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Taleban group last night fired 25 rockets on Kabul city, as a result of which six people were injured.

BAKHTAR reported that over last night and today the Taleban group fired heavy weapons on the Islamic Army's positions and also fired rockets on residential areas of Kabul, injuring six Kabul citizens.

The Islamic Army's units responded to the rocket attacks by Benazir Bhutto's Taleban, pounding their

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positions and concentration points with artillery fire. No report is as yet available on loss of life and material.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Chief Adviser Briefs Envoys on Foreign Policy

BK0404165196 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ambassadors, high commissioners, and heads of UN agencies and international organizations posted in Bangladesh called on Chief Adviser Mohammad Habibur Rahman at his Dhaka office this afternoon. The chief adviser exchanged greetings with them during the meeting. In his brief speech, the chief adviser stated that Bangladesh will continue to pursue the main objective of its foreign policy which is friendship with all and malice toward none. Mr. Habibur Rahman said that the country will remember the assistance provided by them for development efforts. He expressed hope that the partners of progress will continue their support toward the initiatives taken for the development of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh: Interim Government Orders Recovery of Illegal Arms

BK0504072696 Hong Kong AFP in English 0712 GMT 5 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, April 5 (AFP) — Bangladesh's new caretaker government in its first official action has ordered police to recover illegal arms and improve security nationwide ahead of coming elections, officials said Friday [5 April].

The 11-member interim government council, headed by Chief Advisor Mohammad Habibur Rahman, directed law enforcement agencies to "make all-out efforts" in recovering hidden arms.

It also warned them to show "complete neutrality" in collecting arms from both sides of the political divide.

The order was the first official action to be taken by the council that was formed on Wednesday after President Abdur Rahman Biswas dissolved the previous Bangladesh National Party (BNP) majority parliament led by former premier Khaleda Zia on March 30.

Zia stepped down after a two-year standoff with the opposition led by Sheikh Hasina Wajed's Awami League.

Political violence claimed some 140 lives during the standoff, with most of the deaths occurring in violence around February 15 elections which were boycotted by the opposition.

Thousands of others were injured in politically-motivated clashes.

Rahman, a former chief justice, was handed power after Zia's government passed a landmark constitutional amendment bill providing for a neutral administration to oversee future elections, a key opposition demand during the standoff.

Rahman has 90 days, or until June 28, to organise fresh parliamentary elections.

No formal date for the polls have been set for what will become Bangladesh's seventh parliament, but observers say they expect them in early June.

The arms collection order followed appeals for such a move from all political parties. The order also endorses drives by police and paramilitary troops against users of illegal weapons, official sources said.

Security forces Tuesday raided several dormitories at Dhaka University, resulting in the recovery of 14 firearms and about 400 rounds of ammunition and explosives and the arrests of 29 student activists.

Newspapers here reported that rival student groups from the BNP, Awami League and other parties had continued to collect weapons despite the directive.

On Thursday, police said two people were injured after several home-made bombs they apparently were making went off in one of the university dormitories.

Meanwhile, opposition leader Wajed was scheduled to hold a public rally in the port city of Chittagong Friday, Awami League sources said, adding she that would address a similar rally in Dhaka on Saturday to drum up support ahead of elections.

India

India: Editorial Says U.S. Turns 'Blind Eye' to Pakistan's Nuclear Program

BK0504040796 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 4 Apr 96 p 10

[Editorial: "A Message for India"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The manner in which the U.S. is dithering on sanctions on the sale of Chinese ring magnets to Pakistan clearly underlines the triumph of Corporate America over Washington's much publicised principles of combating nuclear nonproliferation. According to the disclosures made by top Administration officials to THE WASHINGTON POST, the U.S. is going ahead with only limited sanctions against China while decisions are still awaited on Pakistan. The CIA

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Director, Mr John Deutch, has already proffered irrefutable evidence to the Senate Intelligence Committee on China's export of "inappropriate nuclear technology and missiles" to Pakistan. Under the 1994 U.S. Non-Proliferation Prevention Act, Washington must cut off loan guarantees to China and halt military and economic aid to Pakistan if there is proof to suggest a covert Chinese hand in enhancing Pakistan's nuclear deterrent. The Clinton administration has preferred to turn a blind eye to the Sino-Pak nuclear skulduggery lest it affects its strategic, economic and political objectives in the region.

According to THE WASHINGTON POST, the U.S. instead of freezing loan guarantees seeks to target the Chinese National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC). The CNNC has no meaningful commercial ties with any U.S. Government agency or corporate entity. By conveniently taking the alibi of CNNC, the Clinton administration seeks to shield its lucrative $10 billion worth business deals which the denial of loan guarantees could have adversely affected. The mandarins in the State Department have discovered a new maxim for their foreign policy — hurt where it hits Corporate America the least. According to reports, the Clinton Administration is also not keen on suspending the delivery of the $368 million Brown package to Pakistan. The Brown largesse is a reward for the relentless clandestine Pakistan effort to put up a credible nuclear weapons programme. Time and again the ambiguity of the Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme has been laid bare by the former Pakistan army chief, Gen Mirza Aslam Beg, and the former Prime Minister, Mr Nawaz Sharief, who harbour no inhibition to flaunt the country's nuclear achievements.

Considering the impotence shown by the sole surviving superpower to rein in nuclear deviants, India can hardly be persuaded to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty [CTBT]. The flouting of the provisions of the NPT [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty] with impunity by China with the sale of ring magnets to Pakistan must serve as a guide to India for entering into "meaningful" nuclear- related agreements. India can lower its guard by signing the CTBT only at its own peril.

India: Editorial Condemns U.S. Patent Protection Charges

BK0504041396 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 4 Apr 96 p 11

[Editorial: "Patently Unfair"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Even before the draft legislation on patent rights is passed by the Indian Parliament, the United States has discovered fresh grounds for complaining about what it sees as the inadequacies of patent protection in this country. In its annual report, the office of the U.S. Trade Representative in Washington has claimed that the U.S. multinationals were losing millions of dollars because of breach of copyright by others. More specifically, it has said that the U.S. drug and chemicals companies alone were losing an estimated $450 million per year on this count. In addition, it has referred to India's failure to protect the biotechnological inventions, methods of agriculture and horticulture and process for treatment of humans, plants and animals — besides video and software piracy. Apart from this being a rather exaggerated picture of the reality, the general weakness of such reports is that they take a narrow self-centered view of the global situation. After having had rows over the patents issue with China and Japan earlier, the U.S. now appears to have turned its attention on India. But in keeping with its practice of using more than one standard for judging situations at home and abroad, the U.S. could be faulted for applying double standards here as well. Marketing American rice under the Basmati label, which contravenes the international regime of the WTO, is but one instance of America's own record. And, as for blanket patenting of traditional products and applications of indigenous plants such as neem [margosa tree], a lot more can be argued to correct the U.S. self-image on this issue.

In fact, there may be nothing wrong with this approach. What the U.S. was doing was acting in its national self-interest. By the same token, it should expect other countries to do the same. It is mainly when Washington assumes a holier-than-thou attitude and presumes to adopt a high moral ground in contradiction to its own performance that problems arise. It should also take note of the positive criticism or weaknesses of the TRIPS [Trade-Related Aspects of Intelecutal Property] regime. It is not for nothing that the draft legislation on the subject was returned by the Rajya Sabha last year. And though the matter is before a select committee, there is a large body of opinion in this country that is critical of some of the negative aspects of the proposed legislation. No less a person than Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer has dubbed it as a form of neo-colonialism. Of course, it might have been easier for Government to carry along public opinion on such a controversial issue if the performance of the developed countries including the United States had been above board. Even so, they must appreciate that such decisions have to be arrived through democratic and consensual means, and not by pressure as represented by the USTR report.

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India: Commentary Views 'Positive Outcome' of Primakov Visit

BK0404142896 Delhi All India Radio General Overseas Service in English 1010 GMT 4 Apr 96

[Commentary by M.K. Dhar]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The two-day New Delhi visit of the Russian foreign minister, Mr. Yevgeniy M. Primakov, has helped infuse a new dynamism and vigor to bilateral Indo-Russian ties. Despite very active contacts at the highest level between the two countries, this was the first official visit by a Russian foreign minister since the breakup of the former Soviet Union. Besides being a man of experience and standing in his own government, Mr. Primakov is familiar with India and is personally acquainted with many Indian leaders, parliamentarians, and academics and has set about to correct the pro-West tilt in President Yeltsin's foreign policy and give it a new Asia-Pacific orientation. India, thus, once again figures prominently in the Russian policy initiative to cultivate old friends. He made it clear during his talks with the president, the prime minister, and the external affairs minister that Russia accorded priority to its relations with India and wanted to strengthen their political and economic contents.

As regards its positive outcome, a hot line is being established between the residence of the Indian prime minister and the Kremlin to enable the top leadership of the two countries to consult each other at short notice on matters of common interest. An agreement on educational, cultural, and scientific exchanges was also signed by Mr. Primakov and Mr. Pranab Mukherjee who also witnessed the initialing of another agreement between the Indian National Science Academy represented by Dr. Varadharajan and the Russian Academy of Sciences represented by the veteran academician, Marchuk, an old friend of India.

Cooperation between India and Russia in various fields is based on shared long-term national interests of the two countries. Trade and economic ties between them have a long history. Even though bilateral trade slumped as a consequence of the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, thanks to the correctives (?applied), Indo-Russian trade has already surpassed the target of $2 billion fixed for 1995-96. It is showing growing trends, thanks to the efforts of the intergovernmental commission for trade, economic, technological, and scientific cooperation established in 1994. Its cochairmen are Russian vice premier, Mr. Yuriy Yarov, and external affairs minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee. The commission has met twice in Moscow and New Delhi and is addressing itself to the task of creating favorable political and economic conditions for the development of the multifaceted Russian-Indian relations on both the state-to-state level and between individuals and entrepreneurs.

The discussion on the regional and international situation revealed a broad measure of agreement between the two sides. Mr. Primakov pointed out that international security was threatened by aggressive nationalism, religious fanaticism, political extremism and terrorism. The 1994 Moscow declaration adopted by the Indian and Russian leaders for the protection of the interests of multi-ethnic, multireligious and multilingual states has evoked a broad international response. The document had for the first time proclaimed that unity, territorial integrity, and successful development of multi-ethnic states such as Russia and India were important prerequisites of international peace and stability. These principles are important for areas bordering Russia and India in the context of the continuing civil war in Afghanistan and clashes on the Tajik-Afghan border. Mr. Primakov and Mr. Mukherjee agreed that external intervention in Afghanistan must end and the Pakistan-trained and armed Taleban force must not be allowed to capture Kabul. India and Russia will closely coordinate their Afghanistan policies in the interest of preserving that country's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Extending full support to the territorial integrity of India, Mr. Primakov also explained that there had been no change in Russia's own stand on Kashmir that the issue is bilateral and must be dealt with as per the Simla Agreement. This is important in view of the fact that the Soviet Union had always vetoed the time-barred and defunct UN Security Council resolutions. Mr. Primakov insisted that Indo-Russian cooperation was of strategic importance to the two countries, their neighbors, and the entire international community.

India: Editorial Claims Russian Minister Supports Kashmir Policy

BK0504041696 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 4 Apr 96 p 8

[Editorial: "Cause for Some Cheer"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] THE revival of Moscow's interest in Asia should bring some cheer to New Delhi. The question mark hanging over the political scene in India would have reminded Russia's foreign minister during his two-day visit to New Delhi of the similar situation back home. There is no telling what the general election in one country and presidential election in the other will throw up. But as Yevgeniy Primakov and his hosts know well, common interests will survive any changes of government. When President Boris Yeltsin replaced Andrei Kozyrev with the former KGB boss a few months ago, it marked the end of one phase in

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Russia's foreign policy and the beginning of another. Communist-nationalist gains in the Duma elections may have had much to do with the correction since undertaken in Moscow's Western-oriented policies, but it was inevitable that Russia would need, sooner or later, to strengthen its Asian political contacts which have been neglected in the last five years.

For India, Russia's renewed interest in Asia has brought fresh assurance of support for its Kashmir policy. During meetings with the Prime Minister and the External Affairs Minister, Primakov is said to have stressed questions of territorial integrity, the importance of preserving multi-ethnic societies and combating terrorism and fundamentalism. In specific terms this is taken to mean that India need not fear moves to revive obsolete UN resolutions on Kashmir and that Moscow will back efforts to settle the issue within the framework of the Simla agreement. So far so good. There is need to be wary, however, of talk in some quarters in New Delhi about developing "countervailing strategies" in other areas such as Central Asia where several powers are involved in a race for influence. Nationalist tensions, the search for oil franchises and the rise of fundamentalism are the causes of increasing volatility in the region. India would do better to support democratic aspirations and broad development initiatives rather than be involved in efforts resulting in the establishment of one kind of hegemony or another. The long term goal of stability which Russia and India, and, presumably, some of the other actors are committed to, can best be furthered by strengthening multilateral institutions and programmes in the region.

India: Petroleum Sector Cooperation Pact Signed With Venezuela

BK0404130496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India and Venezuela are to cooperate in the petroleum sector. An agreement for this was signed in New Delhi today between the minister for petroleum and natural gas, Captain Satish Sharma, and the visiting minister of energy and mines of Venezuela, Dr. Erwin Arrieta Valera. A joint working group has been set up to promote cooperation in all aspects of the hydrocarbon sector. The two countries have identified several areas of priority for setting up joint ventures, including in third countries, in exploration, research, and development.

India: Envoy Advocates World Court Jurisdiction on Terrorism

BK0504061896 Delhi BUSINESS STANDARD in English 28 Mar 96 p 2

[Report from India Abroad News Service]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] United Nations: India has received support from Algeria and Egypt on its demand that terrorism be included among the crimes to be judged by a proposed international criminal court (ICC).

Speaking at the meeting of the preparatory committee for the establishment of the ICC, India said if the court was to deal with crimes of universal concern, terrorism must be among the crimes to be judged by the court. The panel is discussing the possibility of including genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and aggression among the "core" crimes which might be considered by the proposed court.

India's stand received support from Algeria and Egypt. Syria, however, wanted both the right of self-determination and national liberation movements recognised if terrorism was included as a core crime.

India's representative S. Rama Rao told the meeting that while his delegation endorsed the idea of discussing a set of crimes as core crimes to be tried by the ICC, he hoped that it would also discuss other treaty-based crimes, as had been suggested by the draft statute for the ICC prepared by the International Law Commission.

The preparatory committee is charged with developing a widely acceptable, consolidated text of a convention establishing the ICC which would be considered by a conference of plenipotentiaries.

It will take into account views expressed in the ad hoc committee on the ICC, in the General Assembly's sixth committee dealing with legal matters, and in the written comments of states. The work of the committee is based on the draft prepared by the International Law Commission. The committee has elected Adriaan Bos of the Netherlands as chairman.

Last year, the General Assembly decided during its 50th session that the issues relating to the ICC would be discussed over two sessions of the preparatory committee this year, one between March 25 and April 2 and the other in August and then the matter would go to the General Assembly.

Rama Rao told the meeting that international terrorism was a menace confronting the contemporary world. He said the assembled leaders in a recent conference in Egypt on terrorism had made their position clear on

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terrorism and there was a growing consensus that it be condemned and controlled legally.

Rama Rao referred to the declaration adopted at the Egypt conference and argued that it would be unrealistic to have an ICC that did not treat terrorism as a core crime.

Egypt's representative, Nabil A. Elaraby, said if definitions of crimes were made part of the statute of the court, it would not be possible to take action in regard to crimes not mentioned in international conventions. Attaching the definitions of crimes would also result in inflexibility since the court would not be able to adapt to changing circumstances.

China's representative, Liu Zhenmin, said that the proposed court should adhere to the principle of neutrality.

India: 15 Soldiers Killed in Kashmir

BK0404140296 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In occupied Kashmir, the mojahedin have intensified their reprisal against Indian troops in view of its large-scale victimization of Kashmir in a vain attempt to terrify them into submission and restoring the status quo through the electoral ploy. Fifteen Indian soldiers were reported killed. The mojahedin attacked the troops during a military siege at Nowgong in Kazigund area killing four troops. Two mojahedin were martyred in the clash. A common citizen was killed in panic firing by the troops. Six Indian soldiers, including a major, were killed and injured in an encounter with mojahedin at Lake Sar in Hanshipura area. A mojahedin commander, Abdul Hameed, was martyred in the action. Five more soldiers fell victim to firing by the mojahedin in Doro and Khaniar areas. Meanwhile, protest strike continued in the area surrounding dargah [shrine] Hazratbal against the massacre of 29 Kashmiris and JKLF [Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front] leader Shabbir Ahmad Siddiqui. And now a report by our special correspondent, Ghulam Nabi Khayal, in New Delhi on the plight of Kashmiri prisoners, most of them detained without any charge:

[Begin recording] Thousands of Kashmiri detainees languishing in Indian jails are suffering from malnutrition and severe health problems. This was stated by a team of Kashmir lawyers which visited these jails last week. In a comprehensive report submitted to the state high court, the 13-member lawyers' team said that the detainees lodged in prisons in the Indian states of Punjab, U.P. [Uttar Pradesh], Rajasthan, Delhi, and Jammu province are treated in an inhuman manner resulting in their continuously facing mental and physical problems. The lawyers' team visited the jails for about two months disclosing that contrary to the official figures of a little over 700 detainees, there were thousands of Kashmiri youths lodged behind the bars unofficially. The cities where they have been confined without any trial include Allahabad, Sangrur, Jullundur, Varanasi, Jodhpur, Tihar, Itanagar, Kathua, and Udaipur. The lawyers have appealed to Amnesty International and International Committee of Red Cross to arrange their visiting these jails and see for themselves the worst conditions under which the detainees are spending their detention period. Ghulam Nabi Khayal, PTV News, New Delhi. [end recording]

India: Pakistan-Trained Kashmiri Militant Arrested by Delhi Police

BK0404160496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Delhi police has arrested a Pakistan-trained Kashmiri militant owing allegiance to the militant organization, Hizbul Mujahideen. According to a press release, the militant was nabbed in the Jama masjid [mosque] area of the walled city last night as he was planning to regroup other militants for strikes in the capital.

India: Report Claims 'Militants' in Kashmir To Disrupt Elections

BK0504052096 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 4 Apr 96 pp 1,9

[Report by Pusph Saraf]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The spectre of an external threat sets the three-phase Lok Sabha elections in Jammu and Kashmir a pan from those in the rest of the country.

Interrogation of militants caught while crossing Line of Control has revealed that 75 militants, belonging to Lashkar-e-Taiba, the militant wing of the Markaz Dawat-ul-Irshad (MDI) Harkat-ul-Ansar and Hizbul Mujahideen, have been pushed into the Valley with the specific objective of disrupting the poll process.

While 12 of them are said to be women, all are foreigners Afghans and Pakistanis.

The reported intrusion follows a joint meeting of militant organisations at Kotli in Pakistan-occupied territory on March 28. The Jammu-Kashmir Liberation Front (Amanullah) was among those present on the occasion. The meeting took place within 24 hours of a joint session of Pakistan's intelligence agency, ISI [Inter-Services Intelligence], and the Mutaheed Jehad

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Council (MJC) which has been formed under the chairmanship of Hizbul chief Syed Salauddin to coordinate the activities of militant organisations.

The ISI-MJC meet was reported to have discussed a plan of action against leaders of the Forum for Permanent Resolution of Jammu and Kashmir who participated in talks here with Minister S.B.Chavan.

Lashkar-e-Taiba is known as an ultra fundamentalist organisation. Its parent body, MDI, is committed to building an Islamic Society. It had attracted wide attention when it organised a conference between November 1 and 3 last year. Pakistan Jamaat-i-Islami chief Qazi Hussain Ahmed, POK [Pakistan Occupied Kashmir] Jamaat-i-Islami head Abdul Rashid Turabi and former ISI boss Hamid Gul were among those present at the mammoth conference which took stock of the situation in Bosnia, Chechnya and Kashmir.

A close watch is being kept on the moves across the border mainly because of the cold-blooded murder of about 20 top political leaders and a large number of activists during the past seven years. Moulana Masoodi, a member of the Indian Constituent Assembly, was the senior most among those killed.

Others liquidated included Awami Action Committee chairman Mirwaiz Moulvi Farooq, former Speaker Wali Mohammad Itoo, and ex-legislators like Sheikh Mohammad Mansoor, Ghulam Qadir Wani, Mohammad Subhan Bhat, Mir Mustafa, Hissamuddin Bande and Mohammad Jabbar, apart from persons like poet-politician Abdul Sattar Ranjoor.

The National Conference has been the worst sufferer as it is the only party with a mass base. Its top leader Sheikh Nazir, a senior National Conference leader, who stayed put in the Valley, told his party's Working Committee meeting in Jammu last week that 300 top party activists had been killed apart from a large number of workers.

Political killings had begun with the liquidation of an NC in Srinagar in August 1989, when he defied a blackout imposed by militants. These were executed to prevent the revival of any political activity. And, the strings of those who actually committed heinous crimes were pulled from across the border.

The last seven years have seen the most desperate attempts by forces hostile to India to scuttle the restoration of democratic order in the State. Earlier, too, moves to either hold elections or enlist mass support for a well meaning measure have always invited bitter reactions from Pakistan, and at one stage, even from China.

Two examples spread over about nearly three decades will suffice to prove the point. In the early 1950s when efforts began to set up a Constituent Assembly in the State, Pakistan not only asked India to abandon the move but also protested to the Security Council saying that it had been "misled into believing that the proposal to convene a Constituent Assembly in Kashmir was only the act of the Maharaja's Government and that India was not a part of it".

Following the Indira Gandhi-Sheikh Abdullah Accord of 1975, Pakistan panicked to the extent of sending its envoy at the United Nations Iqbal Akhund to UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim to express his country's 'concern and disquiet over the India-Sheikh Accord'. China followed it up three days later on March 4, 1975, describing the accord as the Indian "annexation of Kashmir".

India: Former Ministers Expelled From Congress

BK0404145496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Former union ministers — Mr. Madhavrao Scindia, Mr. P. Chidambaram, and Mr. M. Arunachalam, and Mr. Kamal Nath — stand expelled from the Congress-I. The party spokesman, Mr. V.N. Gadgil, stated this in a reply to a question at a daily press briefing in New Delhi today. He said all party members who contest against the official party candidates stand expelled. He, however, said if they withdraw from the contest, the position will change. Mr. Gadgil also said that the party is considering action against its leader from Tamil Nadu, Mr. G.K. Moopanar.

India: Political Leaders Provided Top Security Cover Listed

BK0504042196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 5 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Twenty-two political leaders have been extended red plus category of security cover. According to Home Ministry sources, they include: the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leaders, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, Mr. L.K. Advani, and Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi; the former prime ministers, Mr. V.P. Singh, Mr. Chandra Shekhar; the CPI-M [Communist Party of India] leader Mr. Harkishan Singh Surjit; and the National Conference Chief, Dr. Farooq Abdullah. With this the leaders who have been provided the red plus category security throughout the country have gone up to 35.

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India: 'Repercussions' Expected From Ruling on Election Spending

BK0504022496 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Supreme Court today ruled that political parties not maintaining properly audited books of account and not filing annual income returns cannot get exemption on the expenditure incurred by them for their candidates.

Our correspondent Bharat Bhushan reports on the fast-breaking judgment.

[Begin recording] [Bhushan] The Supreme Court has ruled that political parties not maintaining audited accounts cannot take advantage of the election law which permit party expenditure on candidates beyond ceiling limits. Election expenditure consists of money spent by the candidate and his party. Till now the party's expenditure on candidates was not being included while arriving at the total expenditure incurred. The Election Commission had earlier written to the government to amend Section 77 of the Representation of the People's Act to plug this loophole. But nothing was heard from the government. The court's ruling now seeks to plug that loophole. The Supreme Court's ruling came on a public interest litigation petition [by lawyer H.D. Shourie].

[Shourie] The election process will not be the same as has been previously, because there will have to be a transparency. The expenditure incurred on the candidates by a political party will no longer continue to be the same as it was previously. The collection of funds by the political parties from the industrial business will also not continue to be the same as has been the case.

[Bhushan] The political parties have welcomed the judgment.

[Congress-I spokesman Gadgil] Whatever the supreme Court decides, that is the law. We have to accept.

[Bharatiya Janata Party spokesman Mahajan] As far as BJP is concerned, we are in total agreement with this law that the election expenditure of a candidate and a party in a particular constituency must be capped together.

[Bhushan] The apex court also ruled that under Section 324 of the Constitution, the Election Commission has the power to ask political parties to submit details of election expenditures for scrutiny. The court held that political parties, by not filing income tax returns for several years, have prima facie violated the law. The court directed the revenue secretary to conduct an enquiry and initiate necessary action amongst all the defaulting national political parties.

[Shourie] The income tax authorities themselves will have to explain as to why they have been indulgent or non-performing in this. So, it is a very wide repercussions this judgment can have on the electoral process. [end recording]

India: Radio Roundup of 4 April Election-Related Developments

BK0404163496

[FBIS Report] Delhi All India Radio Network in English in its newscasts on 4 April carries reports on election-related developments. The most significant event today was reported in the 1430 GMT cast which said: "Former union ministers — Mr. Madhavrao Scindia, Mr. P. Chidambaram, Mr. M. Arunahcalam, and Mr. Kamal Nath — stand expelled from the Congress-I. The party spokesman, Mr. V.N. Gadgil, stated this in a reply to a question at a daily press briefing in New Delhi today. He said all party members who contest against the official party candidates stand expelled. He, however, said if they withdraw from the contest, the position will change. Mr. Gadgil also said that the party is considering action against its leader from Tamil Nadu, Mr. G.K. Moopanar."

Delhi All India Radio Network in English at 1530 GMT, in its detailed election report says the scrutiny of the election nomination papers was completed today. On the expulsion from parties and the switching of affiliations, the report says the Indian Youth Congress-I president has "removed the Tamil Nadu Youth Congress-I president from the post for supporting Mr. Moopanar. In another development, a sitting Lok Sabha member from Rasipuram constituency in Tamil Nadu, Mr. Devarajan, has rejoined the Congress-I from the group led by Mr. G.K. Moopanar. The Tamil Manila Congress party leader, Mr. G.K. Moopanar, has said that the new party's aim is to establish a clean administration in the state. He was addressing a news conference in Madras today."

The report adds: "The former union minister, Mr. Subodh Kant Sahay, has joined the Congress-I. He met the Congress-I president and was admitted to the party." Continuing, the report says: "The breakaway group of the Janata Dal in Delhi led by Mr. Rambhir Singh Bidhuri joined the Congress-I today. This was announced by Mr. Bidhuri at a news conference in New Delhi today. The faction of the Samata Party led by Mr. Chandrajit Yadav has been dissolved. Talking to newspersons in New Delhi today, Mr. Yadav said the decision was taken as the party workers were

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disillusioned with the political uncertainty. He said members of the faction are now free to choose their future course of action."

Citing Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] General Secretary Pramod Mahajan at a Delhi news briefing, the report says that BJP has accused the government of violating the model code of conduct for elections by appointing an executive trustee for the Unit Trust of India. The BJP official also said: "The BJP will support the strongest opposition candidate in Nandyal — one of the two constituencies from where Mr. Narasimha Rao is contesting."

Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT also carries a report on noted politicians defecting from their respective parties. The report says: "The former union minister, Mr. H.K.L. Bhagat, has resigned from the primary membership of the Congress-I. Agency reports say Mr. Bhagat has sent his resignation letter to the party president, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao. The sitting BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] MP from Bharatpur in Rajasthan, Mrs. Krishnendra Kaur, has joined the Congress-I. She was denied the BJP ticket for the Lok Sabha elections. Mr. Ram Gopal Sisodia, a member of the National Executive Committee of the Samajwadi Janata Party [SJP] has resigned from the party. In a press release, Mr. Sisodia alleged that the SJP and the Samata Party want to help the BJP."

Reporting on the filing of nomination papers in Jammu and Kashmir state, Delhi All India Radio Network in English at 0830 GMT says: "In Jammu and Kashmir, a total of 183 nomination papers have been filed in six Lok Sabha constituencies. This is more than double the number of nominations filed in 1989. The highest number of 59 nominations have been filed for the Udhampur constituency."

The report adds that a clear picture countrywide will emerge only after the deadline for the withdrawal of nomination papers expires. The last day for the withdrawal is 6 April, except for Nagaland which is on 8 April. The filing of nominations for 543 Lok Sabha and 914 assembly seats in Assam, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Kerala, and Pondicherry and six assembly by-elections closed on 3 April. Over 22,000 papers have been filed. The highest number — 2,500 nominations for 85 Lok Sabha seats — was filed in Uttar Pradesh.

India: Election Commission Issues Guidelines for Observers

BK0504041296 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 5 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Election Commission has instructed poll observers to identify sensitive and trouble prone polling stations and make an independent assessment of the law and order situation there. According to guidelines prepared for the observers, they should enlist the cooperation of the police for this purpose. The observers have been asked to ensure effective deployment of the central forces and take preventive steps to ensure law and order during elections. They have been asked to make random checks of the polling stations, with particular reference to their location and to ensure that people belonging to the weaker sections and women do not face any difficulty in casting their votes. The observers will monitor adherence of the model code of conduct. They will ensure that no place of worship is used by any political party for election purposes and no appeal is made to voters on the grounds of caste, creed, religion, and community.

India: New Political Front Formed in Tamil Nadu

BK0504111096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 5 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Tamil Nadu, leaders of 11 parties have formed a fourth front for contesting the coming elections in the state. The front has parties, including Pattali Makkal Katchi, the All India Indira Congress [AIIC]-Tiwari, MGR Front, and several factions of the Republican Party of India. The president of AIIC-Tiwari, Tamil Nadu unit, Mr. K. Ramamoorthy, will be the convenor.

The Congress-I and Tripura National Volunteers [TNV] have forged an alliance for the coming Lok Sabha elections. A joint communique issued at the end of a meeting between the two parties says that the TNV will support the Congress-I candidates unconditionally in the state.

India: Article Sees 'Challenges' for Foreign Policy

BK0504051696 Madras THE HINDU in English 4 Apr 96 p 10

[Article by C. Raja Mohan]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] THIS is an year of critical elections worldwide. The impending elections in India, Russia and the United States and those that have already taken place in Taiwan — symbolising the first-ever direct democracy in a Chinese society — could together shape the way international politics will go in the next decade. The year 1996 could determine to a considerable extent the internal and external orientation of four of the six major powers — the other two being Western Europe and Japan — that are likely to have the greatest impact on world politics for a long time to come.

The Taiwanese elections have shaken the long geopolitical stupor in the Eastern part of Asia. The widespread

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hope in Asia that economic prosperity will automatically lead to peace has been rudely shaken. The military standoff between China and the U.S. around the Taiwan Straits last month has shown the potential for a fundamental transformation of international relations in the region including the possible drift to a new Cold War in Asia.

The elections in Taiwan and the military response of Beijing have raised questions about the direction of Chinese nationalism in the mainland and its ability to cope with the inevitable rise of democratic tendencies in the Chinese society. An assertive and aggressively nationalist post-Deng China is likely to result in greater militarisation of the region and increased insecurity in Asia.

Nationalism is also on the rise in Russia, where elections are due in the middle of the year. After years of playing second fiddle to the U.S. under the influence of the "Westernisers", Russia is in search of an independent path in world affairs. It is becoming clear that a new foreign policy direction is being set for Russia, irrespective of whether Mr. Boris Yeltsin or the communists win the coming elections.

In the U.S., the main contest for presidency will be between the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton and the Senate majority leader Mr. Bob Dole. But the trends of isolationism in foreign policy and the opposition to free trade being articulated by Mr. Patrick Buchanan and Mr. Ross Perot have widespread and growing support in the American society. The mainstream candidates will be under considerable pressure to adapt to the ideas of retrenching external commitments, greater protectionism, and stronger global unilateralism.

After its own elections, India will confront a world of great complexity and unpredictability. The interaction among the great powers of the world in the next few years may not be characterised by the quiescence of the last few, despite the fundamental changes such as the end of the Cold War.

Renewed confrontation among groups of great powers or a continually shifting pattern of alliances may not be uncommon in the coming decades. It will be a world of great challenges for Indian foreign and national security policies.

Yet the manifestoes of the major political parties are marked by the absence of a serious discussion of foreign policy and national security issues. Preoccupied as they naturally are with the bewildering domestic political evolution, they have had little time to formulate considered positions on foreign policy.

The Indian Government itself has managed to muddle through five difficult years on the external front. The tentativeness and the ad hoc nature of the Indian foreign policy during the last five years may have been forced partly by the external circumstances and internal weaknesses. New Delhi will need to show a greater coherence in the next five years if it is to successfully defend and advance its national interests in a complex world.

One of the first decisions the new Government will probably have to make is on India's nuclear policy. The comfortable ambiguities of the past on the nuclear front are becoming increasingly unsustainable as the world closes in to limit India's options. As the deadline for completing the negotiations on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty [CTBT] approaches, India is likely to come under intense pressures in the summer to cap and limit its nuclear potential.

India has taken strong diplomatic positions in Geneva in favour of total disarmament. But given the current state of play in the CTBT talks, it is unlikely that India's disarmament aspirations will be met in the final treaty text. Underlying the question of how India needs to respond to an unsatisfactory CTBT is a far more important problem of defining India's position on its own nuclear weapon option. Can India stand up to the Western pressures on CTBT? Will New Delhi be tempted by some incentives that will be dangled by the West to gain India's support for the treaty? Does India have the gumption to transform CTBT into an opportunity that could allow it to become a declared nuclear weapon power? The world will be expecting quick answers from the new government.

Decisions on the nuclear issue are inextricably linked to managing relations with the U.S. that is likely to remain the pre-eminent power in the international system for a long time to come. While the economic and commercial interaction with the U.S. appears set on a reasonable footing, the political and strategic dimensions of Indo-U.S. relations must be expected to go through prolonged uncertainty before they become less ridden with tensions. Like in the last few years, a substantial portion of India's diplomatic energies will have be devoted to coping with the difficulties in the relationship with Washington. While India's overall negotiating position has certainly improved in the last few years, it is still far from being adept at using its admittedly limited diplomatic and commercial assets in coping with pressures from the U.S.

The ability to manage relations with the U.S. will depend to a considerable extent on how effectively India can build strategic partnerships with other great

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powers, particularly Russia and China. A modest revival of Indo-Russian relations is already visible, and the new government will have to work hard to give them an early boost. A far greater challenge is to impart a strategic character to the Sino-Indian relations that have gone through a positive phase but still remain mired in difficulties. An early initiative will be necessary to begin a sustained, high level strategic dialogue with Beijing.

India's international power and prestige will always be limited unless it can dramatically transform its relations with its neighbours into an intensively cooperative mode. In the last few years there have been positive trends in India's dealings with its smaller neighbours, but a new government will have to put in place a comprehensive strategy to build solid cooperative relations with them and work through the many outstanding difficult problems. Relations with Pakistan are in a separate category, with little prospect of early improvement in relations. Nevertheless defusing tensions with Pakistan will remain a major foreign policy challenge.

Two major adjustments — one conceptual and the other organisational — will be necessary for the new government to conduct an effective foreign policy. Learning the difficult art of balance of power politics is the major conceptual challenge for New Delhi. Traditionally, the Indian discourse on foreign policy has shunned the concepts of political realism and balance of power as amoral and dangerous. It is possible to argue that the Indian foreign policy strategy of non-alignment in the Cold War was based on a realist calculation of maximising India's options in a world of two power blocs. Playing the balance of power game in a multi polar world, as opposed to a rigid bipolar system in the Cold War, is far more complex and requires a dynamic foreign policy that needs to cope with contradictory trends and demands.

The precondition for an agile Indian foreign policy is the long overdue reorganisation of national security decision-making to achieve greater coordination within the government. The much talked about national security council remains elusive. Before a coordinating mechanism among the key instruments of national security can be put in place, each of those instruments needs to be made more effective. Basic reforms in the foreign office, the defence establishments, internal security apparatus and intelligence must be high on the new government's agenda. Given the prospect of a hung parliament and a coalition government, substantive reforms in the national security structures may be essential to conduct a serious foreign policy.

Iran

Iran: Shevardnadze's Visit to Turkey, Russia's Approach Viewed

NC0404135296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Turkish 1630 GMT 3 Apr 96

[Unattributed commentary: "Shevardnadze's Visit to Turkey"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Today, President Shevardnadze arrived in Ankara for a two to three-day official visit to Turkey. It was announced that he will hold talks with President Suleyman Demirel and other officials and sign several economic agreements.

More than 20 agreements have been signed between Turkey and Georgia in the political and economic arenas in the past. It is believed that Shevardnadze's visit will improve relations between the two countries. Meanwhile, it has been reported that the common interests of Tbilisi and Ankara have encouraged the two countries to promote their relations. For example, Georgia concluded an agreement with Azerbaijan on the transportation of oil from the Caspian Sea. The agreement created an opportunity for Azerbaijan to sell its oil from the Caspian Sea to the European countries through Georgia and Turkey. That state of affairs encouraged Ankara and Tbilisi to improve their relations. Georgia's leaders attach significant importance on Turkish investments made for the construction of a pipeline through their country.

In addition to the cooperation between Ankara and Tbilisi on the transportation project for oil from the Caspian Sea, Turkey is presently Georgia's major trading partner. Georgia's foreign trade totaled $420 million in 1995. Its trade with Turkey totaled $50 million.

Turkey attaches significant importance to improving its relations with the republics in Central Asia and the Caucasus, including Georgia, because of security reasons and political and economic considerations. Regardless of its economic problems, the Ankara Government plans to encourage the private sector in Turkey to make investments in the said republics. It believes that investments will strengthen its economic situation in the Caucasus. Meanwhile, Turkey plans to improve its relations with the countries in the southern part of Russia to guarantee its security and political relations in order to guarantee its position against any possible threat from Moscow. Undoubtedly, Russia is carefully following these developments.

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Iran: Peace Talks Between Taleban, Afghan Government Viewed

LD0404123396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1002 GMT 4 Apr 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Despite recent misgivings about the likelihood of heavy military clashes between Afghan Government forces and the Taleban group, Mahmoud Mestiri, UN envoy in Afghan affairs, reported yesterday of the group's readiness to hold talks with the government. Although a Taleban spokesman has denied Mestiri's remarks, and even some Afghan circles have expressed doubt about the holding of such talks, political experts evaluate the raising of the issue by the UN envoy as a signal for a heartening change in power relations in Afghanistan. That is because it seems that the UN envoy's statements must, on principle, have a real basis and been made with a measure of certainty, bearing in mind the effects it must have on the legal precedence of the Afghan peace talks. That is why most experts in Afghan issues believe that after the significant progress made in the peace talks between the Afghan Government and members of the Coordination Council — in particular negotiations between government representatives and Hezb-e Eslami — it is not unlikely that some of the Taleban members have concluded that time is not on their side — it is probable that after the resolution of the government's essential disputes and a coalition by the Coordination Council, the Taleban group becomes the target of their joint onslaught and to prevent such a situation, it is necessary to open talks with the government now.

Therefore, such a development can provide the missing link in the usual play in the three-year Afghan conflict, that is, a method for creating a balance of power among the warring groups and their individual relationship with the government. That is because the growth of peaceful tendencies — even in a sector of the Taleban group — will, on the one hand, reduce the military pressure on the government, at least around Kabul, and, on the other hand, encourage the Coordination Council members to continue more serious talks with the government. The scales of the equation of talks and war — the prevalent equation in Afghanistan — will probably be tipped toward talks.

Iran: Velayati Meets With Kuwaiti Communications Minister

LD0404165296 Tehran IRNA in English 1604 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 4, IRNA — Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati on Thursday [4 April] emphasized the need for developing cooperation between Iran and Kuwait.

In a meeting with the visiting Kuwaiti Minister of Communications, Electricity and Water, Jasim Muhammad al-'Awn, Velayati voiced Iran's readiness to reinforce bilateral cooperation on the basis of mutual interests and described it as vital for the total security in the Persian Gulf.

Al-'Awn referred to the sensitive situations of Iran and Kuwait and called for expansion of cooperation in different areas especially in communications, electricity and water supplies.

Expressing satisfaction over the growing relations between the two countries, the two officials exchanged views on cooperation in sea and aerial transportation and transfer of technological know-how in power plants as well as export of drinking water to Kuwait.

The Kuwaiti minister also called for further cooperation in the fields of technology and expertise training between Iran and Kuwait.

Iran: Commentary—Europe Should Not Follow U.S. Policy on Iran

LD0404213196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1955 GMT 4 Apr 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] A delegation from the European Union, which had come to Iran to present a message from this 15-member West European union, left Tehran after two days of talks with Iranian officials, including the foreign minister.

The aim of the group in visiting Tehran was to study how talks between Iran and the European Union could be continued, and to discuss the policies of the two sides on regional issues, as well as conditions and means for taking forward bilateral relations.

In a meeting with [Foreign Minister] Dr. [`Ali Akbar] Velayati, the representatives of the European Union discussed Iranian policy on the issues of terrorism and opposition to the compromise process in the Middle East.

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At this meeting, our country's foreign minister, stressing the correct and principled policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran, repeated the firm policy of Iran regarding all despised forms of terrorism, and also criticized the double standards of the West concerning the issue. He called on the European Union to follow an independent policy, not an American one, and not to be influenced by the propaganda of Zionist factions.

It should be pointed out that the EU representatives visited our country following the recent bombing in the occupied territories of Palestine.

The Zionist regime and the U.S. Government have blamed Iran for indirect involvement in these bombings as well as provision of moral support for the Islamic resistance of the peoples of Lebanon and Palestine; however, they have not provided any documents. They have also pressured Iran's trading partners to end their economic ties with Tehran.

The dispatch of the EU delegation to Tehran, decided by the foreign ministers of the Union, has prepared the grounds for the two sides to reiterate, openly and firmly, their policies on the issues of terrorism and the compromise process.

Tehran expects that the EU will establish stable and firm relations with Iran free from the pressures of the United States and the Zionist regime. Such relations will not sacrifice European interests for U.S. expansionism and international Zionism.

Iran: Jannati Says Invalidation of Some Election Results 'Legal'

LD0404175896 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The secretary of the Guardian Council confirmed today that the cancelling of the results of the first round of Majles elections in several constituencies was on the basis of legal criteria.

Speaking in Tehran at a gathering of the officials in charge of the second round of the Islamic Consultative Majles elections, [Guardian Council Secretary] Ayatollah Jannati added: In assessing election issues, we cannot give preference to sentiment over legal requirements. Naturally, this cannot please those whose desired candidates have failed to find their way into the Majles.

Ayatollah Jannati pointed out: The positive effects of invalidating the election results of some constituencies outweigh its detrimental effects. Those include the prevention of erosion of the true value of elections by some people. The Guardian Council secretary said: Extravagant election campaigns and organizing election carnivals aimed at gaining access to the Majles detract from Islamic values. He stressed the need for the second round of Majles elections to be conducted in the soundest possible way.

Iran: Iranian Pilgrims To Hold Disavowal Ceremonies During Hajj

LD0504123296 Tehran IRNA in English 1152 GMT 5 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 5, IRNA — Iranian haj pilgrims will hold disavowal from polytheists' ceremony in Muna and 'Arafat during the current year's hajj rituals, Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammad Reyshahri, 'amir-al-haj', head of Iranian haj pilgrims, and representative of Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, the leader of Islamic revolution, said here Friday.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Reyshahri quoted the leader of the Islamic revolution, Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i in his meeting with officials in charge of supervising haj affairs on Wednesday [3 April] as saying that such a divine obligation is "real feast of Muslims".

The hojjat ol-eslam pointed out that such a divine ritual is the greatest and the most glorious religious congregational ceremony.

On the eve of Iranian pilgrims' deaparture to Medina for performing this year's haj rituals, Hojjat ol-Eslam Reyshahri, in his pre-Friday prayer sermon said that proclaiming to the world of the cry of the oppressed and also voicing fury against the arrogants were among some of the main responsibilities of Iranian haj pilgrims.

He added that such slogans as "Down with the arrogance" and "Down with the criminal U.S." were the slogans of all freedom lovers around the world.

However, he underlined that the outcry of such slogans beside the house of monotheism had a profound implication.

Elsewhere, in his remarks, Reyshahri stated that haj should serve as a means for globalization of Islam.

The amir-al-haj stressed that haj should be the source for a universal rising of the Muslim world (against arrogant powers) and that the philosophy of haj expresses the materiliazation of these ideals.

Reyshahri indicated that there are many Islamic traditions about spritual and gnostic aspects of haj, parts of which are related to persons benefitting from such divine religious ceremonies during their pilgrimage in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.

The representative of the leader of Islamic revolution finally stated the world community could also fully benefit from this grand ritual and congregation of haj.

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Iran: President Hails Iranian Achievements in Health Service

LD0404142396 Tehran IRNA in English 1300 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 4, IRNA — President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani said here on Thursday [4 April] that achievements of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the development of health service and providing medical care were among the honors of the Islamic revolution.

In a meeting with the health practitioners, instructors and managers of the health centers throughout the country, president Hashemi-Rafsanjani said the Islamic Republic of Iran today is a model country in terms of implementing health programs in the world.

He said that Iran's achievements in health programs was originated in the importance that Islam attached to physical and mental health as well as presevation of the environment.

He said the government's infrastructural programs to provide health facilities in rural and deprived regions, including water and electricity supplies, raod building and communications have developed living conditions in rural areas.

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani said establishment of over 13,000 health centers in rural areas and 1,400 clinics at factories have served to implement the health and medical care programs which in turn prevented spread of contagious diseases throughout the country.

The president hailed and underscored the importance of humanitarian and health programs of international forums and the assistance such organizations rendered to the health programs in needy countries.

He voiced Iran's readiness to cooperate with international organizations in the implementation of their health programs.

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani said that disease prevention should take precedence over medical treatment, adding that health centers in rural areas should observe sanitary principles and seriously implement vaccination of childern and expectant mothers against diseases.

The president later awarded six model health practitioners from throughout the country.

Iran: Private Aluminum Plant Being Established in Qeshm

LD0404185896 Tehran IRNA in English 1735 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] London, April 4, IRNA — The first private aluminium smelter in Iran is being set up in a joint venture between a UK-registered Iranian company and the Qeshm island free trade zone authority.

Prime International of London is reported by Middle East Economic Digest to have a 65 per cent stake in the plant, costing around dlrs 30 million and which is scheduled to start production by early next year.

The UK-registered firm was said to have bought a 33,000 tonne a year potline from ZSNP of Slovakia to be refurbished for recommissioning in Iran. It is expected to be expanded to 150,000 tonnes by 1998 and could eventually produce 200,000 tonnes a year.

Iran already has a state-owned aluminium smelter in Arak, producing nearly 120,000 tonnes a year and another being built near Bandar-e Abbas, but the new one for Qeshm is thought to be the first private plant.

Qeshm island, the largest in the Persian Gulf, is one of several free trade zones opened in the 1990s that offers incentives such as tax holidays to encourage foreign investment.

Nepal

Nepal: Bhutanese Foreign Minister Arrives for Talks on Refugees

BK0504072296 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 5 Apr 96

[Report by THE KATHMANDU POST reporter — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KATHMANDU, April 4 - The Bhutanese Foreign Minister Lyonpo Dawa Tsering has expressed confidence that, with cooperation from the Nepalese side, a major breakthrough on the refugees issue is possible.

Talking to newsmen at the Tribhuwan International Airport on his arrival here for a five-day visit, Tsering said the Bhutanese government is keen to solve the problems between the two countries.

"It is our government's policy to solve the problem and I'm sure with the cooperation from my esteemed counterpart, we will be able to make a breakthrough in the talks," he said.

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Replying to a question on why the issue had remained unresolved for so long, Tsering said, "With mutual understanding and accommodation, and political will, there is no problem we can't resolve."

Asked to comment on the Bhutanese stand on the refugees issue, he said, "It is a subject of negotiation."

Tsering is refused to comment on the number of refugees as well as on whether he has come with any new proposals to solve the issue.

Referring to reports in the Indian press in which the Bhutanese monarch King Jigme Singye Wangchuck was quoted as saying 99 percent of the refugees in Nepalese camps were not Bhutanese nationals Tsering said, "The king was quoted out of context." "He was referring to the peace marchers who recently tried to march from Nepal to Bhutan," he said.

He disagreed to elaborate on whether Bhutan had rejected Nepal's proposal to involve a third party to mediate the talks as "it is a subject of negotiation."

The current (seventh) sound of ministerial talks are being led by the foreign ministers of the two countries as proposed by the Nepalese prime minister to the Bhutanese monarch. The previous six sounds were held at home ministerial level.

"A lot of progress has already been made in the previous rounds," he said, adding, "Let's hope we'll make a remarkable progress this time."

Meanwhile RSS adds: Bhutanese Foreign Minister Dawa Tsering called on Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba at Singh Durbar this afternoon.

During the meeting Prime Minister Deuba said the Nepal is keen on resolving the problem of Bhutanese refugees at the earliest, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He said that Nepal and Bhutan are two friendly kingdoms with traditional ties to friendship and hoped that the two foreign ministers in the ministerial joint committee meeting will be able to resolve the problem to mutual satisfaction so that the Bhutanese refugees who are in camps in eastern Nepal will be able to return to their country.

During the meeting the Bhutanese foreign minister said that His Majesty the King of Bhutan is also interested in solving the problem soon.

Bhutanese Ambassador to Nepal Dasho Nado Rinchhen [name as received], senior judge of the High Court of Bhutan Dasho D N Katwal [name as received] and other officials were also present at the meeting.

Before this, the Bhutanese foreign minister called on Foreign Minister Dr Prakash Chandra Lohani at the Foreign Ministry. On the occasion initial discussions were held on the problem of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal and various other matters.

Talks between Nepal and Bhutan are to start at the Foreign Ministry tomorrow morning.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Gunmen Kill Opposition Party Official in Lahore

BK0404142696 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1409 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The additional Secretary of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Group, Lahore, Mr. Javed Ashraf, was killed and two others injured seriously at Shahrah-i-Qaid-i-Azam near Lahore high court as a result of firing by some unidentified gunmen in Lahore this afternoon. The police has registered the case and is investigating.

Pakistan: Magistrate Issues Press Note on Violence in Lahore

BK0404163296 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1608 GMT 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] According to a press note issued by the district magistrate, Lahore, a group of people came on the Mal Road today and set the traffic police kiosk on fire. One of the miscreants, Zubair Hanif, who was carrying a home-made explosive device was apprehended by a police constable on patrol duty. The constable took him toward the nearby UBL [United Bank Limited] branch to seek help from the police guard on duty there. The accomplices of the miscreants chased the constable and resorted to indiscriminate firing with small arms, which smashed windowpanes of the bank, the Shizan Restaurant, and some vehicles. The manager of the bank and a waiter of the restaurant were injured. The two police guards on duty and the bank guard fired in self defense. During the cross-fire, one of the miscreants was injured who was carried by his companion to the services hospital where he succumbed to the injuries. Cases have been registered under the relevant sections of the law.

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Pakistan: UK Official Denies Deportation of MQM Chief

BK0404103396 Rawalpindi NAWA-I-WAQT in Urdu 4 Apr 96 pp 1,8

[Report by NAWA-I-WAQT correspondent in Dera Ghazi Khan]

[FBIS Translated Text] — MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement] leader Altaf Hussain who has been living in Britain under political asylum will not be extradited to Pakistan. This was stated by Dominique Jeremy, political secretary of the British High Commission, who was addressing leaders of various political and religious parties in Dera Ghazi Khan. He said that the Pakistani Government had requested the arrest and deportation of Altaf Hussain, but had failed to produce concrete evidence against him. Jeremy said that Altaf Hussain sought asylum in Britain, and therefore it is the duty of the British Government to provide him with full protection. Dominique Jeremy said that Altaf Hussain has not committed any crimes in Britain and therefore cannot be arrested by British authorities. Attending the meeting were: Rashid Ahmed Khan Advocate, the district chief of Jammat-i-Islami, Sahibzada Anwar Hassan Qureshi of Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Pakistan, Malik Faiz Mohammad Advocate of Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Islam-Fazlur Rehman Group, Pakistan People's Party leader Ilyas Chandia, MQM leader Hameed Asghar Shaheen, and Sardar Alam Khan Khetran, the District secretary of Muslim League. Sardar Zulfiqar Ali Khosa, general secretary Muslim League-Punjab hosted a dinner in honor of Dominique Jeremy. Jeremy also met with Sardar Mohammad Jamal Khan Leghari, the chairman Social Action Board.

Pakistan: Minister Denies Nation Pressured To Sign Nuclear Treaties

BK0404105896 Karachi DAWN in English 4 Apr 96 p 16

[Report by Ihtashamul Haque]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, April 3 — Pakistan is not facing any more pressure from the United States or other Western countries to sign Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), or accept any other new proposal in this regard.

"This is one of the biggest successes of the present government in two years time that today no country, including America, is asking us to unilaterally sign the NPT or enter into any arrangement that would compromise the national nuclear program," the Minister for Foreign Affairs Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, told DAWN here on Wednesday [3 April].

"We are no more taking defensive posture and neither are we suffering from persecution complex," Sardar Asif said, claiming that high-level mediators and nuclear experts were coming to Pakistan to help resolve the nuclear issue in a regional perspective.

He said Pakistan's point of view on nuclear non-proliferation was now better understood than ever before. "Don't you think it is our big achievement that whenever the nuclear question is raised the international players treat us at par with other relevant countries, including India, do not exclude us as was the practice in the past," he asked.

The foreign minister who has just returned from Geneva after attending two conferences, one each on disarmament and human rights, claimed that Pakistan has very successfully put across its point of view in the two prestigious international forums.

He pointed out that Pakistan was no more considered a maverick country and this was due to government's consistent efforts to make the West realize that Islamabad was not interested in nuclear proliferation.

Sardar Asif said he had held meetings with a number of his counterparts in Geneva besides addressing the Disarmament Commission and Human Rights Commission, and received their support on various issues including Pakistan's peaceful nuclear program and the Kashmir issue.

Talking about the disarmament conference, the foreign minister pointed out that four major issues were discussed which included the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty Convention and the Chemicals Convention.

He said the majority of the participants wanted the CTBT to be signed by June next but it was India which refused to accept it by saying that unless all the nuclear-weapon states destroyed their arsenals in 10 years time, New Delhi would not sign such a treaty.

"India has been isolated after refusing to sign the CTBT," he said, and added that it was impractical to destroy all nuclear arsenals by the nuclear powers.

"We are now amongst the eight world players who are being consulted and given weight as far as nuclear non-proliferation is concerned," Sardar Asif claimed.

About Human Rights Commission Convention, he said Pakistan has very effectively raised the issue of gross human rights violation in occupied Kashmir. "Top people sitting in the commission not only condemned the latest killing of 21 people, including Jalil Andrabi

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and Shabbir Siddiqi, but promised to get the matter fully investigated."

He was hopeful that the representatives of the Human Rights Commission would soon go to occupied Kashmir and would themselves assess the brutal killing of innocent people and other human rights violations.

"I had invited India to sit across the table and resolve the Kashmir dispute peacefully," he said, adding that sooner or later India would have to leave Kashmir.

Replying to a question, he said Indian Government continued to refuse to talk about Kashmir and was willing to discuss anything but Kashmir. "But I am quite certain that one day India would have to sort this long awaited issue out."

The foreign minister strongly dispelled the impression that due to Indian propaganda, Pakistan could not achieve anything in Geneva. "More and more people are hearing about what is actually happening in occupied Kashmir and this is totally a false impression that Indian propaganda has done anything to hide gross human rights violation in the occupied territory, " he said.

However, Sardar Asif regretted that some Pakistanis, especially those of the MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement] and the PML(N) [Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)], had tried to support India by not condemning human rights violations in Kashmir and raised the same issue in Pakistan.

"This is not new and it is happening for the last few years that some disgruntled political elements try to undermine Pakistan's position in the Human Rights Commission but nobody bothers about them," he said, and added that the government efforts to project Kashmir cause was more vivid today and appreciated by the international community.

To a question, he said Pakistan could not afford to reduce its defense budget keeping in view the security situation in the region. "India has increased its defense budget 10 times more which cannot go unnoticed by Pakistan," he stated.

Nevertheless, he agreed that although the defense budget was not discussed in the disarmament conference, it had been taken up on and off by donor agencies.

Pakistan: Leader Says Kashmir Freedom Struggle in 'Decisive Stage'

BK0504034296 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 5 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan, prime minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, has said the liberation movement in Kashmir has entered a decisive stage, and all Indian tactics to subvert it will accomplish nothing. In a press briefing in Lahore, he said about 6,000 freedom fighters have been able to contain the 650,000-strong Indian force sent to occupied Kashmir to suppress the movement.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Military Reports 101 LTTE Killed in Search Operation

BK0504024096 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 5 Apr 96

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A TOTAL of sixty seven Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were killed by government troops in two days of fierce fighting which began on Wednesday [3 April] in the Valikamam West area, bringing the total number of LTTE casualties to 101 since troops began a search operation for Tiger infiltrators in the cleared areas of the Jaffna peninsula last Friday (March 29).

"Army casualties so far have been eight killed and ten to fifteen wounded (including two officers)," military sources said Thursday.

Fourteen Tigers died on Thursday in a confrontation with security forces in the Valikamam West area, and a further 53 were killed on Tuesday morning in two separate operations in the Sangarathai and Sandillipai areas, which are also in the Valikamam West area.

"Twelve LTTE cadres were killed at Sangarathai and another 41 at Sandillipai," a military spokesman giving the breakdown of Tuesday's LTTE casualty figures said.

Tigers confronted by the troops at Sandillipai sought refuge in a kovil [Hindu temple] and started firing at the troops from behind the statues of the gods, military sources further said.

Troops held their fire for fear of damaging the kovil and tried to break in, which resulted in the death of five soldiers, and injuries to two officers and fourteen other soldiers.

"Troops finally smoked out the Tigers and destroyed them when they emerged from the kovil", these sources said.

Machine guns, RPGs and radio sets in possession of the Tigers were also recovered in this operation, they said.

On Tuesday (April 2), at Manipay in the Jaffna peninsula, troops killed 16 LTTEers, including eight women, with no losses from the troops they said.

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On Monday (April 1) 14 LTTE cadres were killed for the loss of two soldiers in clearing operations in the captured areas of Jaffna, and on March 31 four Tigers were killed while the security forces suffered no casualties. One soldier was killed on March 30, when troops were involved in clearing operations in the peninsula.

Meanwhile in the East, a Tiger was killed and two automatic rifles recovered in a combined operation launched by the police and members of the PLOTE [People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam], at Batticaloa, yesterday morning. A policeman and a PLOTE member were injured in this operation, military sources said.

Though food supplies to the north have slowed down, due to LTTE terrorists demanding extortion money from truck drivers, Western aid workers operating in the region however said that there was no sign that food was in short supply, Reuters reported yesterday.

The LTTE in a statement however said that trucks carrying food and roofing material to refugees had been held up at North central Vavuniya, after payments to PLOTE cadres were stopped.

There are an estimated two lakhs of refugees in the Wanni area north of Vavuniya, displaced by fighting between troops and Tigers in Jaffna last December, Reuters further said.

Sri Lanka: Repatriation Agreement With Switzerland Extended

BK0504030496 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 5 Apr 96

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] SRI LANKA and Switzerland have agreed to repatriate Sri Lankans whose application for asylum had been rejected by Swiss authorities.

To help the repatriation, the bilateral agreement for the repatriation of rejected Sri Lankan asylum seekers has been extended for another two years beginning April 2.

The notes for the extension of the agreement were exchanged last week.

The decision to extend the repatriation agreement follows the determination by the Swiss Federal Office in charge of the granting of asylum that the conditions in Sri Lanka are conducive for the return of the rejected asylum claimants.

The number of persons to be repatriated will be determined following consultation, a Foreign Ministry release said.

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